

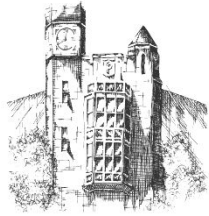
Pelham Memorial High School



College and Post High School Planning Guide

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Pelham Memorial High School

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Dear Student and Guardian(s),

Welcome to the college admissions process! Now begins a journey of self-reflection, identification of preferences, and deep breathing. 😊 As school counselors, we are here to assist you every step of the way from helping navigate Naviance to being a shoulder to cry on.

The college admissions process can be overwhelming. We recommend that you break it into small pieces, going one step at a time instead of all at once. By doing this, the process should be less stressful.

In this guide, we will review the college admissions process as it relates to Pelham Memorial High School. It will include topics such as admissibility factors, decision options, and financial aid. If after reading this document you have additional questions, please feel free to call or email us. Our doors are always open. We look forward to embarking on this journey with you!

Sincerely,

PMHS Counseling Department

Junior Checklist

August:

- Start taking active steps now to make the admissions process as smooth as possible.
- Figure out when you will be able to visit colleges and plan far in advance.
- Research different majors.
 - Get a sense of what is involved when choosing a specific major.
 - You should not be focusing on choosing a major definitively, but learning about your options.

September:

- If you need testing accommodations for the SAT and/or ACT, apply for or confirm approval from College Board and/or the ACT.
- Research, Research, Research!
 - Look into region, size, or academic specialty.
 - Learn about college costs, tuition, and expenses.
 - Sources: Naviance, CollegeBoard, College Websites, The Fiske Guide To Colleges.

October:

- Attend PMHS/Eastchester HS Fall College Fair
- Take the PSAT (ALL PMHS 11th Graders).
- Create an organization system for all your college documents.
- It's not too late to get involved with extracurricular activities!
- Attend Financial Aid Night

November:

- Maintain your grades! The transcript we send to colleges reflects all of your high school grades from eighth grade to the end of your junior year.

December:

- Ask your counselor about registering for the SAT/ACT.
 - Plan to take the test(s) at least one time in the spring and one time in the fall.
 - Ask your counselor about taking the SAT Subject Test in the spring.

January:

- Attend Junior College Planning Night
- PSAT Scores available on the CollegeBoard website
- Individual College Planning meetings begin – register on “Pick a Time”
- Continue to research financial aid options.
 - Use the CollegeBoard College Cost and Financial Aid Handbook and college websites.
- Learn about scholarship opportunities. Millions of dollars in scholarships go unclaimed every year!
 - Check Naviance for available scholarships.

February:

- Visit colleges during winter break.

March:

- If you haven't started already, research different colleges and universities.
 - Look into region, size, or academic specialty.
 - Learn about college costs, tuition, and expenses.
 - Sources: Naviance, The CollegeBoard, and college websites.
- If you are an athlete and plan to continue to play a sport in college, register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (www.eligibilitycenter.org).

April:

- Identify teachers who can serve as recommenders.
 - If you cannot easily name teachers you know well, this is a good time to begin and/or develop relationships.

May:

- Start thinking about your college essays. Be sure to give yourself plenty of time during the summer and fall to brainstorm topics and write, review, and revise your essays.
- Hold on to all of your papers! This includes writing samples and research papers.
 - If you plan to apply to a school with test-optional admissions policies, please note that some of these institutions require applicants to submit graded academic papers in lieu of test scores.

June:

- Plan to make additional college visits for the fall of your senior year.
- Continue to develop/revise the list of colleges that you want to apply to on Naviance.
- Prepare your portfolio or audition pieces if interested in drama, music, art, and/or sports.

July:

- Complete additional SAT I, SAT Subject Tests, and ACT preparation for fall testing.
- Prepare an activities profile to be submitted to your counselor.

Senior Checklist

August:

- Look for the PMHS Summer Mailing.
- Register and continue to prepare for any SAT I, SAT Subject Tests, or ACT for the upcoming fall.
- Create a list of colleges that are the right “fit” for you.
 - Research the program, size, type, location, personality, and cost of each college.
 - Separate your choices into *Most Likely*, *Target*, and *Reach* categories.
- Start on your applications.
 - Create accounts on Naviance and the CommonApp websites, if you have not done so already. Be sure to sign the FERPA waiver on the CommonApp.
 - Fill out little by little, starting with the simple stuff, moving on to activities, and finally supplements and writing. Ask for advice from your teachers or counselor.
 - Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse, if interested in college athletics.
- Be ready to hand in parts of the *PMHS Summer Mailing Packet*. This includes:
 - Signed Transcript
 - Permission forms (including military and disability)

September:

- Feeling overwhelmed? Meet with your counselor to organize testing strategies and college plans.
 - Be sure to schedule an individual meeting with your counselor!
- Attend college visit appointments during school hours and connect with admissions office representatives.
 - To make a positive impression, attend the meetings with questions. Ask specific information about majors, financial aid, the balance between academic and social life, etc.
 - Sign up for these visits on Naviance.
- Schedule visits to college campuses.
 - In order for this to be an excused absence, a submission of a college visit form must be filled out prior to visit. See your counselor for forms. You can find the protocol for this policy in the PMHS Student Handbook.
- Be sure to request letters of recommendation, if you have not done so already.

- Know your application deadlines! Determine whether or not you are applying Early Decision or Early Action.
- Apply for a FSA ID on the FAFSA website.
- Attend Senior College Meeting evening event.

October:

- College Application Boot Camp for all seniors (half day event).
- Attend Fall College Fair, 7:00pm.
- Complete your applications.
- Request that your counselor send the appropriate records to each school that you are applying to.
- Attend Financial Aid Night
- Check to see if your school requires the CSS Profile for financial aid.

November:

- Applications should be completed, especially for Early Decision or Early Action. Be sure to print copies for your records.
- Obtain all financial aid materials from the schools that you have applied to.

December:

- Request your FSA ID, if you have not done so already.
- Double check that all necessary materials were sent to each school that you have applied to.
- Keep your grades up!

January:

- Check deadlines for scholarships and financial aid.

April:

- Notify counselors of your acceptances and decisions.
- Submit your deposit to the school of your choice by May 1st.

May - June:

- Let your counselor know what your post-secondary plans will be.
- Maintain the level of academic achievement that secured your acceptance.
- Enjoy the remainder of your senior year!

July:

- Final transcripts will be sent by the Counseling Department to the college or university you have chosen.

Career Planning

Your career is the work you will do in your lifetime. It will affect how much money you will have, your leisure time, where you will live, and whom you will know. It will greatly affect whether or not you are satisfied with your life.

Most people spend between 20 and 45 years of their lives in full-time work. If your career takes up that much of your life and makes so much of a difference in how you live, isn't it worth some time and effort NOW to make sure your career will help you lead an enjoyable, productive life?

What should you do now? You should **not** try to make an absolute career decision! Since it usually takes 10 years to establish a career lifestyle, you should be developing your knowledge in the four areas that are basic to successful career decision making.

LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF – your values, interests, and abilities.

- Take the interest and aptitude surveys as they are offered in high school through Naviance.
- Watch yourself and notice the patterns of your choices, interests, and abilities as they developed over the years in school, jobs, hobbies and other activities.
Attend one of the PMHS Counselor/Civics sponsored Career Seminars
- Listen to what friends, counselors, teachers, and parents tell you about yourself, what kinds of things you do well, and what kinds of things you seem to like. Sometimes, outsiders have a better view of us than we do.

LEARN BASIC ACADEMIC SKILLS - reading, writing, mathematics and as many technical skills as you can. If you do not, you may have very few career choices open to you.

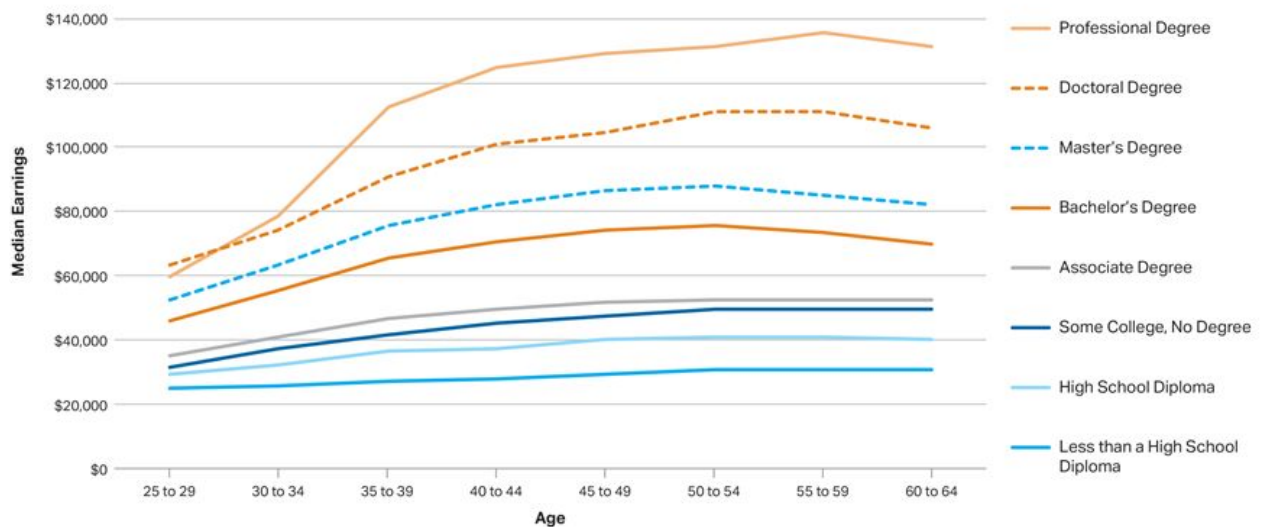
LEARN ABOUT CAREERS APPROPRIATE TO YOU - this takes time and effort. Search until you can find a career that fits you, not vice versa.

- **Read** about the careers that interest you or are suggested by interest inventories, aptitude surveys, counselors, teachers, parents, and friends.
- **Talk** to people in careers that interest you and find out how they prepared for their present jobs (schooling, experience, location, etc.).
- **Get some experience.**
- **Volunteer** to do work where you can get experience in a career you are considering, or to learn more about yourself.
- **Attend** summer programs that might help you **investigate** a career.
- Be **open-minded**, flexible and true to yourself.

COLLEGE PLANNING

Those seriously considering college should be intellectually curious, have initiative, assume responsibility for working on their own, and have a high school record that indicates a good chance for success at the college level. Many careers demand a college education. Another fact to consider is that more and more jobs, that until fairly recently required only a high school education, now call for additional types of training. In their recent College Pays Report, the College Board showed that there is a direct correlation between advanced degrees and higher salaries:

Median Earnings (in 2017 Dollars) of Full-Time Year-Round Workers by Age and Education Level, 2013–2017



SOURCE: The College Board, Education Pays 2019, Figure 2.7

It must also be pointed out that college can provide opportunities for personal growth and development that are not always directly related to career preparation, but would help you to enjoy a fuller and more meaningful life.

HOW TO CHOOSE A COLLEGE

Many parents and students labor under the impression that there is only one college that will fit their needs. Practically speaking; however, there are many colleges among the more than 3,000 accredited institutions of higher learning in the United States that are equally suitable. The final selection of a college rightfully belongs to the student; however, parents (and the high school counselor) should point out what to consider.

Types of Colleges

College

An institution that offers educational instruction beyond the high school level in a two-year or four-year program.

Junior College

Is a two-year institution of higher learning that provides career and vocational training and academic curricula. Community colleges are two year colleges.

Terminal Program – an academic program that is complete unto itself. A student who completes it may not be admitted to a four-year college for further study without completing additional course requirements.

Transfer Program – an academic program that is designed to lead into a four-year program at another college or university. The two-year graduate transfers as a junior to a four-year program.

Liberal Arts College

Is a four-year institution that emphasizes a program of broad undergraduate education? Pre-professional or professional training may be available but is not stressed.

Military Academy

The United States service academies prepare both men and women for careers in the military, Merchant Marines, or Coast Guard. Students attending one of the academies have all educational expenses paid for by the federal government and receive a monthly stipend as well. Admission selectivity is highly competitive. Except for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, the service academies require a congressional nomination. Each of the academies require that graduates complete a number of years within the service following graduation.

Technical College

A two-year institution that offers terminal occupational programs intended to prepare students for immediate employment in fields related to engineering, technology, and the physical sciences. These schools may also offer one-year certificate programs in certain crafts and clerical skills.

University

An academic institution which grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields and which supports at least two degree-granting professional schools that are exclusively technological. It is generally composed of a number of “schools” or “colleges,” each of which encompasses a general field of study.

Finding the Right “Fit”

When constructing your college list or making a final decision about where you’re going to college, the idea of “fit” is complex. You have to shed your ingrained way of shopping for “fit” and understand that there are many important, intangible and often unseen variables that must be considered beyond how a college campus looks and feels at a glance.

You’ve probably heard of these common factors to consider:

- **Location of the college**
- **Size of the college**
- **Cost of the college**
- **Whether the college has your major**

While these things are important, *all students* need to be better consumers, which means thinking about a host of other factors that you may not have given enough consideration or are even familiar with. Why?

According to the report *Help Wanted* from Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce (2010), by 2018 the US will need at least 4.7 million new workers with postsecondary certificates. In addition, the upper class “favors workers with some college or better.” Ultimately, we know that some college is better than no college, but a college degree and a graduate degree will position you for more options and advancement in our new global economy.

This means that when you are constructing your college list or trying to decide which college to attend, your ability to complete college is something you need to strongly consider. And that will mean looking beyond the obvious because completing college becomes easier when you are in an environment that is invested in its students and suited to fit your needs. What is the college doing to help students stay on track and graduate? For example, you’ll want to ask about the following:

1. **The retention and graduation rates for your demographic:** The overall retention and graduation rates that a college reports won't tell you enough. You need to know the retention and graduation rates for students like you. If you're a black female, then you should ask about the retention and graduation rates for black females. If the college can't tell you, then that's a red flag because that's information they should have at their fingertips. This information can be found on the government's [College Navigator](#) site and on [Education Trust's College Results Online](#).
2. **The employment rates for graduates like you:** If you think that you are going to be a psychology major, then you might want to ask about what happens to students who graduate with a psychology degree. The government's new [gainful employment regulations](#) are a step towards ensuring that colleges are being up front about the employability of their graduates.
3. **Career services available to you:** Typically, students don't think about using the college's career services until they are about to graduate and enter the world of work. *All students* should ask about the quality of the services the college offers and how they engage students. If the extent of their services are drop-in appointments, then that might suggest that the college isn't terribly invested in helping their students find a job after graduation.

Other Factors That Every Student Needs to Consider and Why

1. **Average debt upon graduation**—You need to plan accordingly so getting a handle on how well students are funded, on average, is important information.
2. **Safety**—What kinds of safety measures/systems does the college have in place? How seriously do they take student safety? By the way, if you want to know what types of crimes are committed on the campus, you can also find that on the government's [College Navigator](#) site.
3. **Internship opportunities**—Relevant experience in your field of interest is important, especially when you're trying to get a job. Find out what types of internship opportunities are available to you and how the process works.

4. **Academic services**—Even if you don't think you're going to need it, how the college provides support and the sophistication of the services will tell you something about how much they care about their students and want them to succeed.
5. **Retention efforts/student advising**—Colleges may be shocked when you ask about their "retention efforts", but this experience is about your future well-being, and you're not going to invest thousands of dollars if they can't tell you what they are doing to get you through college.
6. **Most popular student events**—It can be difficult to determine the climate of a college's campus, but the most popular student events will give you a glimpse into it. Is it Earth Day? Homecoming? A big college football game?

There are so many questions to ask, but these are some of the ones that all students should ask. Ask these, and you're sure to develop others. Whether you're trying to decide if the college should make it onto your list or you're deciding upon the college that you are going to attend, it is important to remember that it's more than a feeling.

Source: NACAC (National Association for College Admission Counseling)

Conducting Your Search

The college search is very time-consuming and can be anxiety provoking; therefore, the sooner you get started the better! Many students begin their search by using any and all of the resources listed below to create a list of schools in which the student has an interest.

- Barron's Profiles of American College
- The College Board's Index of Majors
- *Naviance* (<http://connection.naviance.com/pmhs>) – identifies schools where Pelham students have applied and gives college information.
- Fiske Guide to Colleges
- Collegeboard.com
- Peterson's Guide
- Rugg's Recommendations

Senior year College Admission representatives will be visiting PMHS. You should come to the Counseling Office and introduce yourself to the admissions representative even if you have visited the school. It is always a good idea to remind the representative, in person, about your interest and application to the college or university! The schedule for college visitations is in the daily announcements, in the Counseling Office and on Naviance. Many colleges and universities track interest via visits to campus, student emails, student attendance at college fairs, and meeting representatives when they visit your high school. These are excellent ways to enhance your college application.

Our college application process will be managed by Naviance which you can access via the PMHS website. You can conduct a college search reflection on what is important to you. Naviance and College Board have a college search available.

Your Campus Visit

One of the most important parts of your college research is the campus visit. Visiting the colleges on your list will give you a firsthand impression of the students, faculty, staff, facilities, and programs. On a visit you can learn what the admission office is looking for in its applicants, gain a feeling for the academic and social atmosphere, see the study/living/recreation facilities, talk with students, and get a sense of the surrounding community.

When to Visit

- Admission offices are open all year, but visiting when classes are in session is best. If you visit in the summer, you can certainly learn about admission and get a general tour of the campus, but it might be hard to get a good sense of the atmosphere of the college.
- The best time to visit? Spring Break of your junior year can be ideal. Even if you are not certain where you might eventually apply, if you can visit one large, one medium size, and one small school, you will be better prepared to make final decisions about where to apply.
- Once you have narrowed your list in the fall of the senior year, you may want to make return overnight visits to schools to which you will be applying. On these visits, plan to go to classes and interact with students.
- If at all possible, try to visit colleges before you apply. You may discover the school is not at all what you had thought it would be based on the on-line research you had done. However, attending accepted students visit programs at the colleges you have visited previously can help you narrow down your choices.
- Special Visitation Days: Some colleges will offer spring programs for juniors and fall programs for seniors. Check online or contact the admission office since you may need to make a reservation.

How to Plan a Visit

- Good campus visit takes two to four hours, including time to get a sense of the surrounding town or area. Don't try to visit more than two schools in one day.
- Figure out an itinerary: where you want to travel, how you will travel, how far one school is from another.
- Call the admission office or go online at least two weeks ahead of time to schedule your visit. Admission offices have set times for tours and information.
- Think of all the things you want to do when you visit and ask what the admission office can help you with: talking with an admission officer, taking a tour, attending a class, meeting with a professor in an area that interests you, eating a meal on campus, talking with a coach or advisor of an extracurricular activity that interests you, etc.
- Research each college before you go visit so you'll have specific questions to ask.
- Contact students you might know at the school before you plan to visit.

What to Do When You Visit

- Focus on people, places and programs in your visit.
- Talk to as many people as you can: students, dining hall workers, tour guides, faculty.
- Look at a campus newspaper and check out campus bulletin boards.
- Wander through snack bars and student centers and observe how students interact with each other.
- Keep track of all names of people you talk with, especially in the admission office.
- Go to the admission session and take the official tour. Listen to the tour guide, but don't jump to a conclusion about a particular school based solely on your experience with a tour guide.
- If you are meeting or interviewing with an admissions staff member, be on time, be yourself, ask questions that deal with your particular needs, make sure you mention anything about your background or achievements that you want the admission office to know.

After the Visit

- Fill out the college comparison worksheet before you get to another campus.
- Send a thank you note to any admission person you meet.

- Look ahead to fall of the senior year to plan a follow-up or an overnight visit.

Source: NACAC (National Association for College Admission Counseling)

Admissibility Factors

Your high school grades are the #1 factor in the college admission decision.

Other factors count, but the body of work you develop in high school is what matters most—as it should.

Colleges do not choose students by the numbers only—they don't simply take the students with the highest grades and test scores. Colleges use many other factors to add depth to the numbers, and to compare applicants with each other to build a class that fits the college's mission. Students who meet or exceed the threshold for admission are, at selective colleges, evaluated based on all of the attributes they bring to campus, including special talents, academic interests, and personal characteristics. Here's a breakdown of what colleges take into account:

Percentage of colleges attributing different levels of importance to factors in the admission decision:

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Considerable importance</u>	<u>Moderate Importance</u>	<u>Limited Importance</u>	<u>No importance</u>
Grades for all courses	74.5%	15%	5.5%	5%
Grades in College Prep Courses	73.2	16.8	5.9	4.1
Strength of Curriculum	62.1	21.9	8.7	7.3
Admission Test Scores (SAT, ACT)	45.7	37.1	12.2	5
Essay or writing sample	23.2	33.2	24.1	19.5
Student's demonstrated interest	16.1	23.9	28	32.1
Counselor recommendation	15.1	40.4	26.6	17.9
Teacher recommendation	14.2	40.2	26.5	19.2
Class Rank	9.1	29.1	34.1	27.7
Extracurricular Activities	6.4	42.9	32	18.7
Portfolio	6.4	11.9	26.9	54.8
Subject Test Scores (AP, IB)	5.5	18.3	35.2	41.1
<u>Factor</u>	<u>Considerable importance</u>	<u>Moderate Importance</u>	<u>Limited Importance</u>	<u>No importance</u>
Interview	5.5	16.4	28.3	49.8
Work	4.1	28.6	36.9	30.4
State graduation exam	2.3	8.7	18.8	70.2
SAT Subject Exams	1.9	5.6	14.8	77.8

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018-19

Additional Factors

While colleges, on average, pay attention to the same types of factors, some colleges pay more attention to some factors than others.

College Size


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small colleges—Have a more “holistic” application review process, meaning they pay more attention to all of the facets of your application. • Large colleges—Have a more “mechanical” application review process, meaning numbers (GPA, test scores) play a significant role in determining your initial qualification. In the case of open-admission or near-open admission colleges, that may be the extent of the process. At more selective large colleges, the initial qualification may be followed by a more holistic review of qualified applicants. • Selective colleges—Both large and small selective colleges (meaning that the colleges accept fewer than half of students who apply) have a more “holistic” application review process.
Grades and GPAs	About two-thirds of high schools weight their GPAs for students who take college preparatory courses. To account for different grading scales among high schools, more than half of colleges <i>recalculate</i> applicants’ GPAs to standardize them.
Class Rank	Nearly one-third of high schools do not report class rank information to colleges. Accordingly, colleges have de-emphasized class rank as a factor in the admission decision over the past decade.
Essays	Do colleges take extra steps to catch cheating or plagiarism on essays? Many colleges that require essays will scrutinize essays that they believe have been forged, borrowed, or heavily edited or influenced by someone other than the applicant. In fact, some colleges have instituted their own verification processes, while others have contracted with businesses that double check essays for plagiarism. Given that many colleges view the essay as an indicator of a student’s interest in attending, it does not pay to have someone else write your essay.
Other Factors that Colleges May Consider	In order to shape their classes, colleges may consider other factors for admission, including a student’s geographic location (especially for public universities), whether a student is the first in their family to go to college (for access purposes), a student’s race or ethnicity (for diversity purposes), a student’s relation to alumni (for the purposes of development and community-sustenance), and gender (for purposes of reflecting the population).

As you start your college search process, check out NACAC's *State of College Admission* report. There, you will find a trusted source of information about the application process without the hype that often surrounds coverage of college admission.

Understanding the Transcript

- A. Personal student information, including: name, student ID number, current grade-level, date of birth, gender, anticipated graduation date and diploma type.
- B. Pelham Memorial High School's address and contact information.
The College Entrance Examination Board code (CEEB code) is utilized by colleges and universities, the College Board, and ACT for identifying and linking our school with college entrance exam scores (e.g., PSAT, SAT, SAT Subject Test, AP, etc.).
- C. Cumulative weighted and unweighted grade point average. Advanced Placement, Syracuse University (SUPA), and State University of New York (SUNY) courses are weighted at 1.1 while Honors courses are weighted at 1.05. All other courses are unweighted. Total credits are also noted.
- D. Course titles by grade. All high-school courses taken by students are included on the transcript, including those taken during 8th grade (e.g., Foreign Language, Algebra, Earth Science).
- E. Yearly Unweighted Grade Point Average is calculated by totaling the final grades (multiply semester courses by .5) and dividing by total credits earned.
- F. New York State Exams. All high school Regents exams are recorded, including the Second Language Proficiency exam from 8th grade. These exams are only recorded as best effort. Students can retake exam, and only the highest score earned will be reported on the transcript.
- G. Grade code conversion chart reflects equivalent numerical grades as alpha marks. Several high schools, colleges and universities request this conversion.

- H. Signature - the transcript must be signed and have an official seal in order to be accepted as an official transcript.
- I. This section reflects the student's current courses for the present school year.

Student Name: ID #: 11570 Gender: F Date of Birth: Anticipated Grad. Date: Diploma Type:	PELHAM MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL 575 Colonial Avenue Pelham, NY 10803 Ph# (914)738-8110 Fax# (914)738-6706 http://pmhs.pelhamschools.org CEEB / ACT Code 334470 Middle States Accreditation	 Pelham Memorial High School Does Not Rank Its Students. Cumulative Weighted GPA: 95.27 Cumulative Unweighted GPA: 92.77 Cumulative Credit Total: 22.00
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Grade: 08 Yearly Unweighted GPA: 92.33 Total Credits: 3.00 Courses 0392 ALGEBRA HON 91 1.00 0480 EARTH SCIENCE 92 1.00 0583 SPANISH 1 94 1.00 D	Current Courses Grade: 12 Courses 0134 ENGLISH 12 AP 1.00 0231 CRIMINAL JUSTICE 0.50 0232 ECONOMICS 0.50 0334 CALCULUS HON 1.00 0438 PHYSICS/ AP 2 1.00 0539 SPANISH 5 1.00 0906 PHYS ED PECS 0.50 I																																				
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Cumulative Unweighted GPA is calculated by totaling the grade (multiply semester courses by .5) and dividing by total credits earned. To determine Cumulative Weighted GPA, multiply honors at 1.05 and AP/College level courses at 1.10.

Official Signature: _____
 Date: _____

Standardized Tests – “Which one do I take, SAT or ACT?” “What about subject tests?”

- SAT – a three-hour-and-50-minute exam that measures Evidence Based Reading and Mathematics with a maximum combined score of 1600 (800 per section). There is an optional Writing portion for this exam. Registration can be done online at www.collegeboard.org
- ACT – a three-hour-and-25-minute exam that measures English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. There is also an optional Writing portion for this exam. The maximum score is 36. Registration can be done online at www.act.org
- SAT Subject Tests – one hour exams that are subject specific. Students may take up to three tests in one day and the maximum score is 800. Registration can be done online at www.collegeboard.org. Students **cannot** take the SAT and Subject Tests on the same Saturday. AP courses offer the best preparation for subject tests. Most schools, that request these scores, want two tests, but a few want three. Check with colleges/universities for specific details.
- Score Choice – Students can choose which test administration to submit to colleges/universities. The colleges/universities have to be in agreement with this practice. If all scores are submitted, colleges/universities may **super score** (take the highest of each section) when reviewing your application.
- Test Optional Schools – students choose to report scores only if they feel it will help in the admissions process. Some schools will ask for a graded writing sample in lieu of test scores. A complete listing of test optional schools can be found at www.fairtest.org.

****You are responsible for sending all test scores to colleges. You are also responsible to determine which colleges require, recommend or will review Subject Tests. Your counselor is always available to assist you. Go to collegeboard.org or actstudent.org to send your test scores. ****

SAT	VS	ACT
Content-based test	Type of Test	Content-based test
Reading: 1, 65-min section; Math: 1, 25-min section (no calculator) & 1, 55-min section (w/ calculator); Writing & Language: 1, 35-min section; Essay: 1, 50-min section (optional)	Test Format	English: 1, 45-min section; Math: 1, 60-min section; Reading: 1, 35-min section; Science: 1, 35-min section; Writing: 1, 40-min essay (optional)
Reading, relevant words in context, math, grammar & usage, analytical writing (optional)	Content Covered	Grammar & usage, math, reading, science reasoning, and writing (optional)
Questions are evidence and context-based in an effort to focus on real-world situations and multi-step problem-solving	Test Style	Straightforward, questions may be long but are usually less difficult to decipher
Math and Evidence-Based Reading & Writing are each scored on a scale of 200-800. Composite SAT score is the sum of the two section scores and ranges from 400-1600	Scoring	English, Math, Reading, and Science scores range from 1-36. Composite ACT score is the average of your scores on the four sections; ranges from 1-36
No – you do not lose points for incorrect answers	Penalty for Wrong Answers?	No – you do not lose points for incorrect answers

Yes – you can choose which set(s) of SAT scores to submit to colleges. However, some colleges require or recommend that students submit all scores. Students should review the score-reporting policy of each college to which they plan to apply.	Score Choice?	Yes – you can choose which set(s) of ACT scores to submit to colleges. However, some colleges require or recommend that students submit all scores. Students should review the score-reporting policy of each college to which they plan to apply.
Math questions generally increase in difficulty level as you move through that question type in a section. Reading passage questions generally progress chronologically through the passage, not by difficulty level. Writing & Language passage questions do not progress by difficulty level.	Difficulty Levels	For the English and Reading sections, the difficulty level of the questions is random. For the Math section, questions generally increase in difficulty as you progress through the section. For the Science section, passages generally increase in difficulty as you progress through the test, and questions generally become more difficult as you progress through a passage.
Arithmetic, problem-solving & data analysis, heart of algebra, geometry, pre-calculus, and trigonometry; formulas provided	Math Levels	Arithmetic, algebra I and II, functions, geometry, trigonometry; no formulas are provided
Seven times per year: March or April, May, June, August, October, November, December (note that some states offer the SAT as part of their state testing requirements; these tests are not administered on the national test dates)	Offered when?	Seven times per year: February, April, June, July, September, October, December (note that some states offer the ACT as part of their state testing requirements; these tests are not administered on the national test dates)
Typically about four weeks before the test date	Registration deadline?	Typically about five to six weeks before the test date
www.collegeboard.com	More Information	www.act.org

2020 Registration Deadlines

SAT Exam Dates

Test Dates

Registration Deadlines

March 7, 2020.....February 7, 2020

May 2, 2020..... April 3, 2020

October 3, 2020September 4, 2020

November 7, 2020.....October 7, 2020

December 5, 2020.....November 5, 2020

Cost: \$47.50 without the essay/ \$64.50 with the essay

ACT Exam Dates

Test Dates

Registration Deadline

April 4, 2020..... February 29, 2020

June 13, 2020..... May 8, 2020

Cost: \$42 without the essay/\$62.50 with the essay

Note: February, July, and August SAT's and ACT's are NOT offered in NY State.

Please be aware that if you are experiencing financial hardships, you may ask your counselor for a fee waiver for both exams. The guidelines for this waiver can be found on the College Board and ACT websites. *

Student Activity Profile – *“What do you do in your free time?”*

- Humanizes an applicant by highlighting the extracurricular, academic, and athletic accomplishments of the student.
- Students are encouraged to list special talents, interests, work experience and volunteer efforts.
- PMHS requires a student activity profile.
- The Common Application asks for activities in order of importance and hours spent with a brief description of duties and responsibilities. Depending on your institution, you may be able to upload your activity profile directly to the application.

Student Activity Profile Example #1

First name A. Last name
200 Mockingbird Lane
Pelham, NY 10803

Pelham Memorial High School
Pelham, NY 10803

Honors and Awards

- Commended Writer (11,10)
- National Latin Exam semi-finalist (10,9)

Extracurricular Activities

- Chess Club (12,11)
- Italian Club (12,11,10,9)

Sport

- Modified Football (9)
- Varsity Football (12,11,10)
 - Team Captain (12)

Community and Volunteer Service

- Hope Nursing Home – making presents for the elderly (10,9)
- Catholic Youth Organization (12,11,10,9)
- Serving the homeless on Thanksgiving (11,10)
- Breast Cancer Walkathon (12,11,10,9)

Employment

- C-Town cashier: 15 hours per week (12,11)
- Summer Breeze Day Camp: Counselor – 40 hours per week (summer 11,10,9)

Interests and Activities

- Reading: Enjoy mot fiction, especially espionage
- Sports: Swimming and Running
- Computer: AppDesign
- Piano: Studied Piano since age 6

*Note 1: Items within each category should be listed with the years you participated in that activity. For example: (12, 11, 10). You may use indentations, bullets, arrows, etc. throughout the profile to highlight your accomplishments; however, your indentation and symbol should be consistent.

*Note 2: Should your activity profile be more than one page, repeat the heading on the second

Student Activity Profile Example #2

Pelham Memorial High School
Pelham, New York 10803

CEEB code: 334470

Honors and Awards	Grades
National Honor Society	11-12
NYS Science Honor Society	10-12
Pelham Memorial HS Latin Honor Society	11-12
Columbia University Model UN – honorable mention	11
National Latin Examination – <i>magna cum laude</i>	9
2005 Young Science Achievers – cert. of excellence & group grant	9
Pelham Memorial HS high honor roll – All marking periods	
Extracurricular Activities	
Model United Nations Club (Vice President – Grade 12)	10-12
Peer Leadership	11-12
Sock ‘n Buskin, School Drama Club	9-12
Girl Scouts (Silver Award in Fall, 2005)	3-12
SADD	10-12
School Senator	9
Community Service	
Kids Helping Kids	10-12
Group of students create a series of skits for elementary students relating to peer relationships, good decision making and substance abuse prevention	
Tutoring through National Honor Society	11-12
Altar Server at Local Church	9-11
Summer Internships and Courses	
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center – internship in lab	11-12
SUNY Purchase – Shakespeare course at summer youth program	11-12
Musical Endeavors	
Chorus	6-12
Select Chorus	10-12
Orchestra	3-9
Piano Lessons	2-12
Voice Lessons	11-12
Sports	
Varsity swim team (co-captain- grade 12)	8-12

Varsity crew	10
Summer crew	10
NYAC summer swim team	10

Letters of Recommendation – “*Who do I ask?*”

- Students should choose two academic teachers from junior year to write letters on their behalf.
- Letters should be able to give anecdotal information about your participation in the course, not always the class in which you earned the best grade.
- Start early and choose wisely...ask teachers in May of junior year and remember, neither you nor your counselor will be able to see the letter of recommendation once it's written. The teacher writes the letter and sends it directly to the college/university.
- Make sure to request your recommendation on the Naviance system. This allows teachers to submit their recommendations electronically
 - Counselors will also write a letter (we are not included in the teacher recommendation count).
- Outside letters (i.e. from employers) are acceptable **if** they can provide different information than what has already been submitted and the college/university allows it.
- The Common Application and some college applications have a teacher and/or counselor form that should be completed. Your counselor has the Common Application form on Naviance.
 - Colleges/universities may limit the number of recommendations that can be submitted. Students should refer to the school specific website for details.

****** Don't forget to write thank you notes to teachers who write on your behalf.**

Writing a College Essay: Top Tips

Start early. The more time you have, the less stress you'll have. You'll have plenty of time to give the essay your best effort.

Be yourself. Take a moment to think about what interests you, what you love to talk about, what makes you sit up and take notice if it's mentioned in class or on TV. Then write about it.

One of the biggest mistakes students make is "writing what they think others want to hear, rather than about an issue, event, or person that really had significance for them," says the dean of admission and financial aid at Hamilton College (NY). An essay like that is not just boring to write, it's boring to read.

Be honest. You're running late (see number 1), you can't think of what to write, and someone emails you a heartwarming story. With just a tweak here and there, it could be a great essay, you think. It's what you would have written if you'd just had enough time. Don't be fooled! College admission officers have read hundreds, even thousands of essays. They are masters at discovering any form of plagiarism. Adapting an email story, buying an essay from some Internet site, getting someone else to write your essay—admission officers have seen it all. Don't risk your college career by taking the easy way out.

Take a risk. On the other hand, some risks can pay off. Don't settle for the essay everyone else is writing. Imagine an admission officer up late, reading the 50th essay of the day, yours. Do you want that person to nod off because he or she has already read 10 essays on that topic?

"The danger lies not in writing bad essays but in writing common essays, the one that admission officers are going to read dozens of," says an associate director of college counseling at Mercersburg Academy (PA). "My advice? Ask your friends what they are writing, and then don't write about that!"

Keep in focus. This is your chance to tell admission officers exactly why they should admit you. Unfortunately, some students try to list every single reason, their stellar academic record, their athletic prowess, their community service, all in a page or two. When that happens, the essay looks like a grocery list.

Instead, read the essay question carefully and jot down a few ideas. Then choose the one that looks like the most fun to write about. Stick to that main theme throughout the essay. You don't have to list all your achievements, that's what the rest of the application is for. Use the essay in a creative way to help the admission officers get to know you as a person.

Write and rewrite. Don't try to write a masterpiece on your first try. It's not possible, and all that pressure is likely to give you writer's block. For your first draft, write anything that comes to mind about your topic. Don't worry too much about grammar or spelling. Just get it down on paper (or computer screen). Then let it "rest" for a few hours or a few days. When you come back to the draft, look for ways to make it more focused and better written. Some people are "fat" writers: they write long, wordy first drafts that need to be shortened later. Others are "skinny" writers: they write short and simple first drafts and then need to add details or examples to "flesh out" the skeleton. Either way, don't be afraid to make major changes at this stage. Are there details that don't really relate to the topic? Cut them. Do you need another example? Put it in.

Here are two other things to try, suggested by a college counselor.

- Remove the introductory and concluding paragraphs, and then see if your essay seems stronger. These paragraphs are often the most likely to have unnecessary detail.
- Go through the essay and cut out every "very" and every "many" Words like these are vague, and your writing is often stronger without them.

Get a second opinion. Even best-selling novelists ask other people to read their manuscripts before they're sent to the publisher. When you've rewritten the essay to your satisfaction, find someone who can give you advice on how to make it even better. Choose a person you respect and who knows something about writing, a favorite English teacher, a parent or a friend who writes for the school paper. Ask them to tell you what they like best about your essay, and what you can do to improve it. Criticism of your writing can be tough to hear, but try to listen with an open mind. You don't have to make every change suggested, after all, it's your essay and no one else's, but you should seriously consider each suggestion.

Proofread. Finally, you're ready to send your essay. Not so fast! Read it over one more time, looking for those little errors that can creep in as you write or edit. If you're using a computer, also run a spell check. Sometimes, it can be difficult to catch minor typos—you've read the essay so many times you see what should be there rather than what is there. To make sure you catch everything, try reading your essay out loud or having someone else read it out loud to you. Another strategy is to read the essay backward, from the last sentence to the first. That makes it just unfamiliar enough for errors to stand out.

Don't expect too much from an essay. The application essay is important, but it's not the only thing that is considered. "Can [the essay] make a difference in getting the 'thin versus thick' envelope? Absolutely, but that is the exception rather than the rule". That's because admission officers look at the whole package—your academics, extracurricular activities, standardized tests, and other factors. A great essay rarely makes up for a weak academic record. On the other hand, a mediocre essay won't necessarily consign your application to the "deny" list. So make your essay as well-written as you can, but don't put so much pressure on yourself that the rest of the application fades in importance.

Source: NACAC (National Association for College Admission Counseling)

Sample Admissions Essays

Accepted by Harvard, Princeton, Dartmouth, and Stanford (Courtesy of EssayEdge)

Hiking to Understanding

Surrounded by thousands of stars, complete silence, and spectacular mountains, I stood atop New Hampshire's Presidential Range awestruck by nature's beauty. Immediately, I realized that I must dedicate my life to understanding the causes of the universe's beauty. In addition, the hike taught me several valuable lessons that will allow me to increase my understanding through scientific research.

Although the first few miles of the hike up Mt. Madison did not offer fantastic views, the vistas became spectacular once I climbed above tree line. Immediately, I sensed that understanding the natural world parallels climbing a mountain. To reach my goal of total comprehension of natural phenomena, I realized that I must begin with knowledge that may be uninteresting by itself. However, this knowledge will form the foundation of an accurate view of the universe. Much like every step while hiking leads the hiker nearer the mountain peak; all knowledge leads the scientist nearer total understanding.

Above tree line, the barrenness and silence of the hike taught me that individuals must have their own direction. All hikers know that they must carry complete maps to reach their destinations; they do not allow others to hold their maps for them. Similarly, surrounded only by mountaintops, sky, and silence, I recognized the need to remain individually focused on my life's goal of understanding the physical universe.

At the summit, the view of the surrounding mountain range is spectacular. The panorama offers a view of hills and smaller mountains. Some people during their lives climb many small hills. However, to have the most accurate view of the world, I must be dedicated to climbing the biggest mountains I can find. Too often people simply hike across a flat valley without ascending because they content themselves with the scenery. The mountain showed me that I cannot content myself with the scenery. When

night fell upon the summit, I stared at the slowly appearing stars until they completely filled the night sky. Despite the windy conditions and below freezing temperatures, I could not tear myself away from the awe-inspiring beauty of the cosmos. Similarly, despite the frustration and difficulties inherent in scientific study, I cannot retreat from my goal of universal understanding.

When observing Saturn's rising, the Milky Way Cloud, and the Perseid meteor shower, I simultaneously felt a great sense of insignificance and purpose. Obviously, earthly concerns are insignificant to the rest of the universe. However, I experienced the overriding need to understand the origins and causes of these phenomena. The hike also strengthened my resolve to climb the mountain of knowledge while still taking time to gaze at the wondrous scenery. Only then can the beauty of the universe and the study of science be purposefully united.

Attaining this union is my lifelong goal.

Admissions Interview

- Personalizes the application process.
- May be required, recommended, or optional in many schools. They may not be offered to others.
- Most interviews are informational.
- For some colleges, the interview may have an impact on the admission decision.
- If a college offers an interview either with an admissions representative, a student, or alumni, it is a good idea to participate in the interview.
- You should do your homework and know about the college before your interview.

The Truth About College Interviews

Anticipating an interview with a college admissions officer makes many students nervous. Unsure students may imagine something more like an interrogation, complete with rapid-fire questions and a bare bulb hanging overhead.

The truth is most college interviews are relaxed, informative, and even fun.

"The interview is as much about you finding out about the [college] and whether it fits you as it is an interrogation with dire consequences," says John Boshoven, counselor for continuing education at Community High School (MI) and director of college counseling for Jewish Academy of Metropolitan Detroit.

In other words, very few colleges use interviews to weed out applicants. A great interview could enhance your application—especially if your interviewer is the same person who will assess your application—but it won't make up for a weak academic record. On the other hand, a so-so interview probably won't hurt your chances. Just taking the time to visit the college and talk to an admission officer makes a positive impression, because it shows that you're really interested in the college.

But why settle for a so-so interview when a little preparation can make you stand out from the crowd? Here are some tips to change an interview from ho-hum small talk into meaningful conversation.

Know your Stuff

Spending your interview just finding out basic facts about the college is a waste of your time (and the admission officers). Before you schedule an interview, read up on the college and make sure you're really interested.

"I always tell my students to do their homework and not ask for any information they can find elsewhere (Internet, guide books, view books, etc.)," says Sue Bigg, an educational consultant from Illinois.

Know yourself--and be yourself.

Admission officers want to get to know you—not some fake personality that you think will impress them.

"There is no 'personality type' or 'lifestyle' that is synonymous with a successful interview," says Cigus Vanni, a counselor at Howell High School (NJ). "Give your interviewer credit for being able to discern if you're being a phony."

Instead, get comfortable with yourself. Be prepared to discuss your interests, talents, and experiences. Also, think about how your interests fit with what the college offers.

"Students who understand their wants and the qualities they desire in a college, and who can articulate their needs, allow for the best interaction," says Kevin Kropf, associate director of admissions at Albion College (MI).

Before the interview, think about how you'd answer the following questions.

- What are your goals?
- How does this college fit in with your interests and talents?
- What majors are you interested in, and why?

- What are you passionate about?
- Why do you want to attend college? Why this college?
- What extracurricular activities are important to you?
- What academic or intellectual topics interest you?
- What types of books do you enjoy reading?

"Students who can share their own thoughts and discuss books impress me more than students who wax eloquently on something they obviously heard from their teacher," says Kropf.

Ask good questions.

Often, your questions tell an interviewer more about you than anything else. Asking how many students attend the college, for example, tells the admission officer that you haven't done your homework. On the other hand, insightful questions show that you've thought seriously about the college and your own needs.

"Come with specific questions in mind that are sophisticated," says Robert Massa, former Vice President of Enrollment, Student Life, and College Relations at Dickinson College (PA). For example, he adds, a student interested in biochemistry may want to ask how that major can be combined with studying abroad.

One strategy is to jot down several important questions ahead of time and take the list with you to the interview. This gives you two advantages: you make sure not to forget anything, and the admission officer is sure to be impressed by your level of preparation.

Here are a few examples of good questions:

- What percentage of students come back after freshman year?

- Can you tell me some things about _____ program/major?
- What makes _____ program/major a good one?
- What social options are available if I don't join a fraternity/sorority?
(for colleges with Greek systems)
- What campus issues are students talking about this year?
- How involved are students in extracurricular activities? Do most students stay on campus during the weekends?

"Asking 'why?' allows for the student to learn more than the superlative descriptor of a department or program," says Kropf. "Of course your English department is great--tell me why it is great."

Beware of these questions!

Your first-grade teacher was wrong—sometimes there is such a thing as a stupid question. Boshoven lists some questions to avoid:

- What majors do you have?
- Do students have to go to class?
- What are the dorms like?
- Want to see my tattoo?

Remember your manners.

First impressions do count. Don't let how you're dressed get in the way of connecting with your interviewer.

"There is no merit in taking extreme positions in fashion," says Vanni. "Glamour and slovenliness should both be avoided—no need to rent a tux nor to make a statement

by under-dressing."

Casual dress is fine--especially if you're planning to walk all over campus later. You should be comfortable, without looking like you're headed to a wild party or an evening in front of the TV.

Also, don't forget about whoever you're traveling with. Remember to introduce your parent(s), friend(s), and even your pesky younger brother to the admissions officer.

And for a great last impression, write a thank-you note to the person who interviews you (make sure to get his/her business card before you leave the admissions office). Many students don't take the time to do this—which will make you stand out as the wonderful, well-mannered person you are.

Written by Jennifer Gross (NACAC)

Social Media

- Although most colleges will state that they have very little time to research student's digital trail, it is happening more frequently. Be smart and think about everything you post online before you do it. The Internet has a LONG memory. After all your hard work, the last thing you want to keep you out of your top school or program choices is an inappropriate Facebook photo or offensive tweet.

Applying to Special Programs – Art/Music/Drama

- If you are applying to an Art program you will need to have a portfolio. Talk with your art teacher. This needs to be done well in advance of your application process. You will need to determine how each school will review your portfolio.
- Some schools will require an interview.
- If you are applying to a music program, you will most likely be required to give an audition.
- Some schools require an additional application.

Tips for Artistic Students Who May Pursue Art Studies after HS

It is said there are 152 careers in art. Be confident that you will find work and follow your dreams of pursuing an art career.

- Start as early as possible in building an art portfolio. Don't procrastinate—your portfolio should be complete by November of your senior year. Most colleges ask for 12-20 piece of artwork.
- Take as many art courses as possible at PMHS in order to build a diverse portfolio.
- Focus on observational (created by observing an object, scene, or person) artwork the most—this is what colleges want to see most. Also, colleges are very interested in seeing art from your sketchbook, so remember to keep a sketchbook.
- Avoid putting drawings that are copies of illustrations, cartoons or photos in your portfolio. Also, avoid emulating other artists in your portfolio (ex. making a painting that looks like Van Gogh's "Starry Night").
- Work harder than everyone else in your class on your portfolio. It will make a difference when you apply for college.
- Try to take advantage of Art opportunities outside of school (museums, galleries, classes, summer programs).

- Read art magazines like Art Forum, Art in America, Design ID and Juxtapoz so that you can be knowledgeable about contemporary art and take inspiration from it.
- Visit colleges and decide if an art school, art major at a liberal arts school or liberal arts school with a partnership with an art school is right for you.
- Use AICAD (Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design) website as a resource for Art and Design Schools (<http://www.aicad.org/>).
- Use College Art Association website as a resource (<http://www.collegeart.org>).
- Bring your art portfolio to National Portfolio Day (a college fair in which you bring your portfolio to be reviewed by arts schools and liberal arts schools with art majors—they will give you feedback and tell you if any changes are necessary) in the fall of freshman or senior year of high school for feedback from colleges and art schools (<https://nationalportfolioday.org/>)
- Keep in touch with your art teachers for advice and guidance. They are there to help you.

So you want to pursue music?

• As a Music Major

As a junior, immediately start researching music schools to see what is required for entrance auditions. Build a chart of information including:

- **Date of Auditions:** Some schools require a pre-audition tape. They will choose those students they wish to further consider from the tape. It is highly recommended that you use a professional recording studio professional who has a lot of experience recording your instrument. For example, if you are a violinist, do not use a guitar player to record your performance.
- **Required Repertoire:** Instrumentalists are asked to play major Concertos with Cadenzas, unaccompanied sonatas/Partitas/Suites, 2 contrasting pieces, scales, and etudes. Singers are asked to prepare 4 Art Songs in 4 languages: English, Italian, French, and German or Spanish, plus to arias from operas (one aria should be by Mozart).
- **Ear-training Exam:** When auditioning in person, most music schools give an exam to test ear-training. The candidate needs Music Theory background for this.

- **Interview:** Some conservatories want to meet with candidates to determine character. For example, they want to make sure the candidate will handle stress, pressures, criticism, and demands.

Prospective Performing and Visual Arts Students

Students who wish to study visual or performing arts have some unique challenges and options during their college search. If you're considering a major in music, art, dance, or drama, read on for some advice from the experts.

A Difference of Degree: BA vs. BM

Prospective arts majors have two degree options: a bachelor of arts (BA) degree with a major in the arts and a bachelor of fine arts (BFA) for artists/performers or bachelor of music (BM) for musicians. The BA degree is the typical liberal arts degree, students who major in English, history and other humanities majors also earn BA degrees. The BFA or BM degree is more focused and intense.

"There is a world of difference between a BA in music and a BM in music," says a school counselor and military advisor at Pope John XXIII High School (NJ), who holds a BM and MM (master of music). "A BA in music will be pretty much like any other BA degree, lots of courses outside of your major with approximately 12 or so courses in your major. That's not a lot of music for the student who is looking for an intense musical experience. A BM in music essentially is a professional degree. Within my 120+ credits for my BM, only 36 were liberal arts courses. The remainders were music or degree-related courses: private lessons, conducting classes, music history, music theory, etc."

The degree you choose depends on your college and career goals. If you have a high degree of commitment to your art and desire an intense, often competitive college experience, a BFA or BM might be right for you. If you would rather study a variety of subjects along with your arts major, a BA may be the way to go.

What Type of College is Right for Me?

Visual and performing arts students have several types of colleges to consider. Conservatories and stand-alone arts schools offer an immersion-type experience for students earning BM or BFA degrees. All of the students you meet at this type of school will be artists, and the atmosphere is often highly competitive.

Some larger universities offer BFA/BM degrees as well as BA degrees in the arts. You may find somewhat self-contained music or arts schools within the larger university. In this atmosphere, you could pursue the more specialized degree while still keeping the door open to taking a few liberal arts courses (which would be unavailable at specialized music or arts schools). In addition, a university-based arts program might give you the

option of pursuing a double degree, such as a BM in music and a BA in history. (A double degree would require more than four years, however.)

NACAC holds several Performing and Visual Arts College Fairs across the nation, free to students, parents and counselors. Find a fair in a city near you and meet with college representatives face-to-face.

A Look Inside the Portfolio

In addition to completing a typical college application, students in the visual or performing arts should prepare a portfolio or audition. Each arts program has different requirements, so you should contact the schools as early as possible to obtain their portfolio or audition requirements.

Although your portfolio or audition is an important part of the application, arts programs also heavily consider your academic record and test scores.

"Some [colleges] place greater value on academics, while others lean more toward the student's portfolio or audition," according to several counselors who specialize in the arts. "Most colleges balance the student's creative talent with their academic achievements."

Assessing Your Abilities

If you're interested in pursuing an arts major and career, now is the time to seek objective opinions of your abilities in the field. A dean at Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University (IL), offers this advice to young musicians: "In addition to asking for honest advice and evaluation from high school ensemble and private teachers, students can get outside assessment from musicians at a local symphony, dance company, theatre, etc. Of course, everyone doesn't live in a big city, so this may require driving one to two hours or more to get this advice, but it's worth it."

Visual arts students can receive portfolio evaluations and college information at one of the National Portfolio Days sponsored by an association of arts schools and art departments at universities. For more information, talk to your guidance counselor or art teacher.

Other Considerations

All students benefit from visiting the colleges that interest them and asking questions about academics, student life and other facets of college life. As an arts student, you may have different or additional considerations.

Location. The location of your chosen college may be more important to arts students than to students in other majors.

"There may be many factors to consider when choosing where to study," note the counselors. "For art students, these should involve access to professional venues such as museums, galleries, theaters and concerts. Also, do these venues attract regional, national, or international talent to inspire and educate the students? Additionally, the opportunity to perform, exhibit and have active internships is vital to a young artist's education."

Facilities. In addition to checking out dorm rooms, classrooms, and athletic facilities, art students should look at a college's studio space or practice rooms, performance or exhibit venues on campus, darkroom facilities (for photographers), computer resources, and any other resources specific to your field of study. And ask questions about how accessible these resources are to students: attractive studios are of no help if there aren't enough to go around.

Reputation & Philosophy. Talk to your art, music, drama, or dance teachers about the reputation of the colleges you're considering. Ask the colleges about career opportunities for graduates and about what their alumni are doing. The goal here is to get an idea of how the program is perceived by professionals in your career field and what career opportunities you might have after completing college.

Also, ask each college about their philosophy. Different fine arts or music programs can have very different emphases. For example, one music program may emphasize classical music, while another specializes in more modern forms, like jazz. Similarly, the intensity of competitiveness, workload, and pressure can vary from school to school. During your visits and talks with students and faculty, try to get an impression of the daily pressures of being a student in that particular program.

The Perfect Fit. Finally, as for any student, visual and performing arts students need to find a college that fits their personality, interests and goals. Especially for very

ambitious students, it's easy to be dazzled by the prestige of a top professional school or arts department and overlook the question of whether the program is right for you.

"When working as dean of enrollment at New York City's Manhattan School of Music, I would run across the occasional unhappy student who came to New York City because someone else had told them that New York or Manhattan School of Music or a particular teacher was perfect for them," recounts the Roosevelt University dean. "They listened to those mentors instead of their gut and made a wrong choice. No matter how talented the student and how wonderful the school, fit is always crucial."

Source: NACAC (National Association for College Admission Counseling)

Disability Programs

All colleges and universities provide some level of services and/or accommodations for learning disabled students as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). There are colleges and universities that go a step further. Some offer programs with differing levels of comprehensiveness designed to support student's needs.

It is important to look at schools who consider your progress as opposed to rigor of your high school courses. It may be helpful to look at schools that are test-optional. Visit <http://fairtest.org/university/optional> for a complete list of test-optional colleges and universities. During the admissions process, colleges cannot ask about a disability. If you believe your disability has had a negative impact on your grades or test scores, it might benefit you to explain to an admissions officer or committee. Some colleges do not ask for information about a student and his/her disability until after he/she is accepted.

When students enter college, the accommodation process begins anew. Students must decide if they want to request accommodations. In order to qualify for services, students will need to provide current psychological testing and for some a current educational evaluation so colleges can determine the level of services they will provide to the student. Some colleges and universities have programs that provide more direct and comprehensive services. For these programs students may need to apply directly to the disability program in addition to applying to the college. There may be two separate applications. Some disability programs may request an interview. To find out more about the level of services they provide you can go to <http://www.college-scholarships.com/learningdisabilities.htm>.

Generally, there are no Federally-funded scholarship or loan programs specifically targeted to students with disabilities. However, there may be local or regional scholarships or loan programs established by eleemosynary or charitable organizations for which you might be eligible. The HEATH Resource Center produces a helpful guide to scholarship and other funding sources. Look for the "Financial Aid Guide" publication at <http://www.heath.gwu.edu/node/9>.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE DISABILITY SERVICES

There is no Special Education at the college level. Educational rights covered by IDEA (Individuals With Disabilities Act) do not apply to postsecondary education. Colleges must comply with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the civil Rights Restoration Act. College students have civil rights, but no “education” rights.

Postsecondary institutions are required to:	Postsecondary institutions are NOT required to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Make all programs and services physically accessible to all students</i>• <i>Provide auxiliary aids, notetakers, and appropriate equipment to ensure the participation of students with disabilities in college classes and activities</i>• <i>Accommodate the academic participation of qualified students with disabilities in college classes and activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Provide specific auxiliary aids as long as the college provides a method of assistance that allows equal opportunity</i>• <i>Provide academic modifications if these modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the course or program or place undue burden on the institution</i>• <i>Lower admission criteria for applicants with disabilities</i>• <i>Diagnose a disability or conduct testing and assessment of learning difficulties, physical, or mental impairments</i>• <i>Provide personal attendants</i>• <i>Provide personal or private tutors</i>• <i>Prepare “Individualized Education Programs” (IEP’s)</i>

Differences in Policies and Procedures

High School

College

The school is responsible for identifying students with disabilities

The student must self-identify or disclose his/her disability

The school must provide the assessment of disability, classify disability, and involve parents

The student must provide documentation of his/her disability to the designated office

School staff will discuss academic progress with parents or legal guardians

The student is considered an adult with privacy and confidentiality protections. Staff cannot talk with parents or legal guardians about the student's academic progress

The school must develop an Individualized Educational Program

The student must request specific accommodations and provide supporting evidence through documentation

The school must provide a free and appropriate education including modified program and appropriate related services

The student must act as independent adults to activate and obtain accommodations and structure weekly schedules

The school must coordinate the provision of all services, monitor progress, and evaluate results

The college must provide reasonable accommodations for students who qualify

Differences in Courses

High School

College

Class attendance is mandatory and monitored carefully

Students are expected to follow the instructors attendance policy as stated in the syllabus

Teachers will usually approach students who are having academic difficulties
Teachers remind students of assignment due dates

Students are responsible to ask the instructor for help

Students are responsible for keeping track of their projects, assignments, and tests dates

Teachers will provide students with missed information when they are absent

Students must approach their instructors for information they missed when absent

Teachers many times will provide extra credit assignments to help students raise their grades

Extra credit assignments are not usually given

Make up tests are usually available

Make up tests may not be an option

Teachers present information to help the student understand the textbook

Instructors may not follow the textbook, but lectures enhance the topic

Differences in Accommodations

High School

College

Services include individually designed instruction, modifications, and accommodations based on the IEP

Reasonable accommodations may be made to provide equal access and participation

Modifications that change course outcomes may be offered based on the IEP

The college is not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential requirements

Appropriate accommodations are determined by the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)

Appropriate accommodations must be determined based on the student's disability documentation, and individual need

Differences in Parent's or Legal Guardian's Role

High School

College

Legal guidance is provided by IDEA

Legal guidance is provided by Section 504 and ADA

Parents must ensure that their child attends school until the age of 16	Parents are not required to send child to college
Periodic progress reports are given to parents	No progress reports will be given to parents
Teachers are free to approach parents without consent from student to discuss student's progress	Without a release of information signed by the student the teacher legally cannot include the parents in any part of the educational process
The parent is the student's legal guardian	In college the student is considered to be his/her own legal guardian unless there is a court order to the contrary
The parent is expected to advocate for the student	The student is expected to advocate on his/her own behalf

Tips for College-Readiness:

Self-Awareness:

- Know your strengths and weaknesses.
- Become knowledgeable of your disability & the supports that are needed to address it.
- Set realistic goals for yourself that are challenging yet attainable.
- Become knowledgeable of your learning style.

Social Skills:

- Develop relationships with your peers, teachers, etc.
- Participate in activities such as clubs, teams, and school events.

Self-Advocacy:

- Be able to identify your own needs.
- Talk to your teachers, counselors, and support staff.
- Attend meetings about your needs.

Motivation:

- Use your skills effectively and efficiently.
- Set goals for yourself and continue to motivate yourself to achieve those goals.

Study Skills:

- How do you study for an exam?
- How do you research a topic?

- How do you organize information?

Documentation & Legal Framework:

- In order to qualify for services, you must provide the school with current psychological testing or an educational evaluation
- All colleges and universities provide some level of services or accommodations for students.
 - In order to find out your rights, you can visit the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/know.html>

NCAA Requirements

Many students in our athletic programs have achieved a high degree of competency in varsity sports to enable them to be considered for athletic scholarships. It is important for students and parents/guardians to understand that Division I NCAA eligibility for athletes is based on a sliding scale that consists of SAT or ACT scores and grade point average (GPA). Division II has no sliding scale. The minimum core grade point average is 2.30. The minimum SAT score is 820 (V & M) and the minimum ACT score is 68. 14 core courses are required for Division II. 16 core courses are required for Division I. The SAT combined score is based on the verbal and math sections only. The writing section will not be used. SAT and ACT scores must be reported directly to the clearinghouse from the testing agency. For more information regarding the rules, please go to WWW.NCAA.ORG click on “Academics and Athletes” then “Eligibility and Recruiting”.

Core Units Required for NCAA Certification

DIVISION I FULL QUALIFIER SLIDING SCALE				DIVISION I FULL QUALIFIER SLIDING SCALE			
Core GPA	New SAT*	Old SAT (Prior to 3/2016)	ACT Sum	Core GPA	New SAT*	Old SAT (Prior to 3/2016)	ACT Sum
3.550	400	400	37	2.750	810	720	59
3.525	410	410	38	2.725	820	730	60
3.500	430	420	39	2.700	830	740	61
3.475	440	430	40	2.675	840	750	61
3.450	460	440	41	2.650	850	760	62
3.425	470	450	41	2.625	860	770	63
3.400	490	460	42	2.600	860	780	64
3.375	500	470	42	2.575	870	790	65
3.350	520	480	43	2.550	880	800	66
3.325	530	490	44	2.525	890	810	67
3.300	550	500	44	2.500	900	820	68
3.275	560	510	45	2.475	910	830	69
3.250	580	520	46	2.450	920	840	70
3.225	590	530	46	2.425	930	850	70
3.200	600	540	47	2.400	940	860	71
3.175	620	550	47	2.375	950	870	72
3.150	630	560	48	2.350	960	880	73
3.125	650	570	49	2.325	970	890	74
3.100	660	580	49	2.300	980	900	75
3.075	680	590	50	2.299	990	910	76
3.050	690	600	50	2.275	990	910	76
3.025	710	610	51	2.250	1000	920	77
3.000	720	620	52	2.225	1010	930	78
2.975	730	630	52	2.200	1020	940	79
2.950	740	640	53	2.175	1030	950	80
2.925	750	650	53	2.150	1040	960	81
2.900	750	660	54	2.125	1050	970	82
2.875	760	670	55	2.100	1060	980	83
2.850	770	680	56	2.075	1070	990	84
2.825	780	690	56	2.050	1080	1000	85
2.800	790	700	57	2.025	1090	1010	86
2.775	800	710	58	2.000	1100	1020	86

ACADEMIC REDSHIRT

Categorizing Schools

- “**Reach**” school: a college or university that accepts students with higher GPA and SAT/ACT scores than the student has achieved. Generally, a student applies to **1 or 2** “reach” schools.
- “**Target**” school: a college or university that accepts students that match the student’s GPA and SAT/ACT scores. Generally, a student may apply to anywhere from **5 TO 7** “target” schools. Remember these are only 50 - 50 schools.
- “**Most Likely**” schools: a college or university that accepts students with GPA and SAT/ACT scores a bit lower than the student has achieved. Generally, a student applies to **2** “most likely” schools.

Types of Schools

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| • Most competitive
SAT 1250-1600; ACT 29 | 96 grade average |
| • Highly competitive
SAT 1150-1250; ACT 27-28 | 90 grade average |
| • Very competitive
SAT 1050-1150; ACT 24-26 | 87 grade average |
| • Competitive
SAT 900-1050; ACT 24 | 82 grade average |
| • Non-competitive | 70 grade average |

** From Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges, 28th Edition*

*** The SAT Scores above do not include the writing test*

**** This is only a guide to be used with other college search information*

What are the Different Ways to Apply to a College or University?

There are *two* main categories of admission options –

Non-restrictive and restrictive

Non-restrictive application plans do not restrict students from applying to other institutions. You'll have until May 1st to consider your options and confirm enrollment. There are three application plans under non-restrictive:

- Regular Decision
- Rolling Admission
- Early Action—this is an “early” option

Regular Decision means that you turn in your application by the college's deadline, and they let you know by a specified date.

For **Rolling Admissions**, schools review applications as they're submitted and make decisions throughout the admission cycle (usually within four to six weeks of submission of the application). It is usually wise to send your application as soon as possible since some colleges will fill their class by early winter.

With **Early Action**, you send your application by the early deadline and the college sends you its decision earlier. Some colleges do have additional restrictions on their early action programs, though, so make sure to read the instructions carefully from each college.

There are two types of restrictive application plans:

- **Early Decision**
- **Restrictive Early Action**

When you decide to apply **Early Decision**, you are committing yourself to going to that school. Early Decision is for those early-bird students who already have a clear first-choice college. If you're still comparing colleges and don't want to limit your choices yet, Early Decision is not for you. Why? Early Decision is a contract between you and the college. You agree that if the college accepts you, you'll withdraw all other college applications and attend the early decision college. Because of this commitment, you can apply Early Decision to only one college.

The other restrictive option is **Restrictive Early Action**. This one means that you apply to your school of choice and get a decision early. Be aware, though, that some schools restrict applicants from applying to any other early plans at other schools. If you go this way, you'll have until May 1 to confirm that you'll be attending.

These early options can be confusing—some schools even have more than one of these options—so talk to your guidance counselor if there's anything you don't understand.

Colleges respond to early applications in one of three ways: acceptance, denial or defer applications over to regular decision.

NACAC (National Association for College Admission Counseling)

DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION



National Association for
College Admission Counseling
Guiding the way to higher education

STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST SUITS YOU?

Non-Restrictive Application Plans

Regular Decision

DEFINITION:

Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Rolling Admission

DEFINITION:

Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Early Action (EA)

DEFINITION:

Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Restrictive Application Plans

Early Decision (ED)

DEFINITION:

Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.

COMMITMENT:

BINDING

Restrictive Early Action (REA)

DEFINITION:

Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.

Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions.

For a copy of this flyer, please visit www.nacacnet.org

Deciding About Early Decision and Early Action

Early Decision Self-Evaluation Questionnaire*

Answer the following questions to decide whether or not to apply early to a particular school. If you answer yes to every question, consider applying ED. If you answer one or more questions with a no, consider applying EA or regular decision.

Questions	Yes	No
Have I completely researched this college and other colleges that interest me?		
Have I visited this college while classes are in session and met with someone at the admissions office?		
Have I explored my academic, extracurricular, and social options at this college?		
Have I talked with a financial aid officer to get an estimate of college costs and to find out how early decision could affect my aid package?		
Have I discussed this decision with my family and guidance counselor?		
Is this a true first choice, or do other colleges still interest me?		

Pros and Cons of Applying to College Early

Pros

- Bypass regular spring notification deadline
- Avoid cost of submitting multiple applications
- Reduce time spent waiting for a decision
- Have to deal with less stress if accepted
- May increase chances of getting into top schools and greatly increase chances of getting into less selective schools
- May get financial aid bonus for applying early

Cons

- Must make serious decision before exploring all options
- Can only apply to one school
- May not have time or opportunity to compare financial aid packages
- May have no or fewer aid options and few scholarship options
- Sometimes compete with a smaller but much stronger pool of candidates than during the regular application period
- If rejected, may feel disappointed and discouraged

DO's

- Withdraw all applications upon being accepted
- Request a release from your contract only if the college is unable to work out appropriate financial aid
- Take your Early Decision seriously
- Discuss the cost of college before applying
- Attend the college that accepts you

DON'TS

- Apply to ED programs at more than one college
- Have your counselor send transcripts to more than one ED school or to any other schools once admitted
- Try to get out of an ED acceptance because you've changed your mind
- Have someone else write or heavily edit your application essays
- Submit deposits to more than one college
- State an intended major you don't plan on pursuing because you think it might help you get admitted
- Inaccurately describe your activities and accomplishments
- State to more than one college that it is your first choice

Early Decision Do's and Don'ts

*Excerpted from NACAC's Steps to College online newsletter

Parenting and Surviving the Process:

The college application process can be a stressful time. Parents want what's best for their children. Children want to please parents. Deadlines, commitments, expectations, responsibilities, and obligations are all part of daily life that cause stress. Adding the task of completing 10 or more applications can be daunting.

Some things to consider:

- Don't discuss colleges, applications, and essays every minute.
- Allow time for family, school, daily activities, and fun.
- Think of the application process as you would when you attend your child's game or performance – STAY BEHIND THE WHITE LINE!
- Let your child do the application – you are the advisor – your child is the applicant.
- Be aware of timelines and deadlines.
- Be a role model about handling stress and keeping the process in perspective.
- Listen a little more – even though you've been there done that. Things have changed since you went to school and continually do from year to year.
- Remind your child to listen to the little voice inside that tells him/her what feels right.
- Keep your sense of humor.
- Enjoy the process - there are many choices and there will be the right one for your son or daughter.

The Application Process – Senior Year

Generally, there are two parts to an application: one for the student applicant to complete and the other for the high school counselor. Students will complete the Common Application or individual school application, which will include the student essay and, in some cases, a supplemental report. Be sure to print out and proof read your applications

You will be using Naviance to keep track of your applications. The counseling portion of the application requires that students sign the FERPA form to give permission to send academic records. Students **MUST** indicate on Naviance all the schools to which they are applying. Students will put colleges in the *Colleges I'm Thinking About* on Naviance. Once a student decides to apply to a college, the student will transfer the college's name from *Colleges I'm Thinking About* to *Colleges I'm Applying To*. This will allow the counseling office to submit supporting documents.

Naviance is helpful because it provides students with application due dates and indicates whether or not the college accepts the Common Application or requires the use of the individual school application. Students should always confirm an application deadline from the college or university website.

Students will need to provide the counselor with a College Checklist form signed by both the student and his/her parent/guardian. The counseling office will electronically upload the school report, the student's transcript, the PMHS profile, and the counselor letter of recommendation. Due to the high volume of applications, **students must give their counselor the transcript request form 10 school days prior to college application deadline**. Otherwise, we cannot guarantee that supporting documents will be sent by the due date.

College Application Information

The following is information that you may need for completing your college applications.

High School / CEEB Code: 334470

School Address:
575 Colonial Avenue
Pelham, New York, 10803

School Phone Number: (914) 738-8101

Fax Phone Number: (914) 738-6706

Principal: Mrs. Jeannine Clark

Director of Counseling Services Mr. Eugene Farrell

Ms. Gena Archer

Counselors: Mr. Luis Barceló

Ms. Katelin Cuccia

Mr. Terence Huvane

Ms. Carla Matus

Financial Aid

The FAFSA – The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is required by most colleges for financial aid consideration. It is a form that can be prepared annually by current and prospective college students (undergraduate and graduate) in the United States to determine their eligibility for student financial aid (including the Pell grants, and work-study programs). It is available October 1. <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>

The CSS Profile - The College Scholarship Service Profile, is an application distributed by the College Board in the United States allowing college students to apply for financial aid. It is primarily designed to give private member institutions of the College Board a closer look into the finances of a student and family. It is much more detailed than the FAFSA. <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp>

Helpful Hints and Practical Ideas

Admissions and financial aid professionals are good resources.

The process of applying for admissions, scholarships, need-based financial aid, loans, etc. can be complex and confusing. Take advantage of the admissions and financial aid staff at the colleges you are considering. They can help you through the complex web of forms, policies, and procedures. Your school counselor is also a helpful resource folks in this process.

When in doubt, apply for financial aid.

Do not assume that because your neighbors or best friends did not qualify for need-based aid that you will not either. If your income is above a certain arbitrary level, do not assume that you will not be eligible. Factors other than income are important in need analysis. Each family's situation is unique and will be considered individually. **Remember that the information you submit is treated confidentially.**

Deadlines are important!

Policies, deadlines, and requirements for admissions, scholarships, and financial aid vary from school to school. Be sure to observe them. In particular, be sure to comply with deadlines for admissions applications, financial aid applications, and scholarship applications. Schools with limited resources may not be able to meet the financial needs of students who apply late.

Follow Instructions!

Carefully follow instructions for all admissions, financial aid, and scholarship forms.

Use good data on financial aid forms to avoid time-consuming delays.

Use accurate information when you complete your applications for need-based financial aid. The more accurate the information, the less likely it is that you will be required to submit correction documents later. The correction process is time-consuming and can cause delays in consideration of your aid application. Current federal tax returns are your best financial references when completing need-based financial aid applications.

Keep copies!

Keep a copy of everything you submit to any school or agency. This includes applications for admissions, scholarships, need-based financial aid, loans, etc.

Source: Davidson College. College and University Financial Aid.

Choosing a college and paying for it: Myths and Facts!

Myth: Admission to ABC College is too selective. I'll probably be rejected, so I won't even apply!

Fact: If a college seems to meet your educational and personal needs and objectives and you think you may qualify for admission, you should apply. Depending on the number of applicants and their qualifications, you may not be accepted, but you'll never know if you don't apply!

Myth: ABC College costs more than my family and I can afford, so I won't apply for admission.

Fact: Need-based financial aid, merit-based assistance, and creative financing options can make a college education affordable. Don't rule out any college because of its cost until you find out what financial options are available.

Myth: Cost is a good yardstick for comparing colleges.

Fact: Cost is not the best way to compare one college with another. Assess the capacity of a particular college to meet your educational goals and personal needs. Consider the opportunities offered for intellectual development and personal growth in light of your aspirations and requirements

Myth: Financial assistance is available only for the best and brightest students.

Fact: Eligibility for need-based aid is determined by demonstrated financial need, not academic ability. (However, some non-need-based, or merit, scholarships are awarded based on a student's academic potential, personal characteristics, and/or special talents.)

Myth: Most families don't qualify for need-based financial aid.

Fact: Many families qualify for need-based aid. The only sure way to know if you qualify is to apply. Fill out the necessary forms and let the financial aid folks decide.

Myth: Our family income is over \$100,000, so I know we won't qualify for financial aid.

Fact: There is no specific income ceiling for aid eligibility. Other factors are also important in need analysis, including assets, family size, and number in college.

Again, the only sure way to find out your eligibility is to apply.

Myth: But our neighbors' child started college last year. They applied for financial aid and didn't qualify.

Fact: Each family has its own unique financial picture and personal circumstances. Each college is different in its costs, its policies, and its capacity to meet the financial needs of its students. Failure to apply for aid and other programs can cause you to miss out on programs for which you might be eligible.

Myth: the financial aid forms and application process are too difficult to understand. Applying for aid is more trouble than it's worth.

Fact: It is true that the forms are detailed, but that's because the information is important. Only when a financial aid officer has detailed information about your individual financial and personal situation can he or she make an equitable judgment about your eligibility for need-based aid.

Myth: We've calculated a preliminary estimate of our expected family contribution. The expectation that we can afford to pay that amount out of our current income is completely unrealistic.

Fact: Most families can't pay the expected family contribution out of current income alone. The formulae assume that families will choose to use a combination of savings, borrowing, and current income in order to fund their contribution.

Myth: The forms and the whole financial aid system seem cold and impersonal. The information is submitted to some central processor and run through a computer; there doesn't seem to be any human element in the process.

Fact: There are many people who are involved in the financial aid process -- and who are available, and eager, to answer your questions. In particular, your college counselor and the admission and financial aid professionals at the schools to which you apply are excellent resources for help and information.

Things to consider after you are admitted

Compare financial aid packages from the colleges you are considering. The College Board's Web site (www.collegeboard.org/student/pay) has an excellent calculator that helps you to appropriately compare need-based financial aid packages from different schools.

Compare the types of financial aid.

What types of aid are in each package? What is the proportion of grants, loans, and campus employment funds?

Compare living costs.

Does the college guarantee to provide housing for all four years? Living off-campus can be expensive!

Compare policies concerning financial aid for future years.

Does the college guarantee to meet your financial need for all four years? Or just one? Or not all?

Compare the bottom line.

How does the total aid package compare with the total cost of attending the institution? Look at the total budget and then analyze the aid you're actually awarded. Be aware that some schools only consider your need in light of direct costs, i.e., tuition, fees, room, and board, not TOTAL costs, including books, transportation, and personal expenses.

Remember – your key question is **NOT** how much grant money you receive. Rather it is how much your family has to pay and borrow to afford the college.

Financial Aid Information

The lack of adequate family financial assistance should not prevent any student from attending college. If the student has the necessary ability and motivation, financial assistance is available from a variety of sources.

The procedure at most colleges follows these general guidelines:

- A student applies for admission before the application deadline.
- A student applies for financial aid in accordance with stated deadlines in the “FAFSA” form which is available in the guidance office after October 1.
- Information required for admission and for aid is sent to separate offices of the college.
- The admissions committee meets and grants admission (of course, if an applicant is not accepted for admission, he/she is not considered for aid).
- The financial aid office reviews the accepted candidates and determines, on the basis of FAFSA information and its own sources, the need of various candidates.
- The financial aid office awards packages of aid to candidates within the limits of available resources.
- Candidates are notified by the admissions office of acceptance and, either at the same time or shortly thereafter, by the aid office its awards (or non-award).

There are many programs to help pay for your undergraduate college education. As a New York State resident, you may be eligible for these and other programs by using the same form.

*FAFSA- Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Financial Aid Information (continued)

There are several sources of financial aid to which many families can apply. This application process begins as early in the senior year, but it is advisable to identify sources of financial aid during the spring of the junior year.

Some sources of financial aid are:

Federal Grants:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (S.E.O.G)
- College Work-Study

New York State Assistance

- Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)
- Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship
- Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship

Loans

- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Stafford Loan

Other Possible Sources:

- Local Scholarship (published in April of senior year)
- Certain Labor Unions and Corporations
- ROTC
- Fraternal Organizations (i.e., B.E.O.P., Masons, etc.)
- Religious Organizations (i.e., Knights of Columbus)
- Service Organizations (i.e., Rotary)
- Some companies offer aid to children of employees