

College Application Process



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This booklet is offered as an overview of the college application process. We realize that each student's situation is unique and encourage both students and parents to work with your guidance counselor whenever questions arise. The booklet is divided into the following general areas:

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INTRODUCTION

Choosing and applying to a college can be a challenging task. It involves an honest appraisal of one's own **strengths** and *weaknesses*; the clarification of goals with respect to ongoing education and career interests; the research of information about schools that hold promise for a happy and successful college experience; the timely completion of the application process; the final selection of the school that one will attend.

Beginning with the freshman year, the student needs to be responsible and diligent in their studies as well as realistic and courageous about taking a challenging course of study. Students should involve themselves in a variety but realistic number of extracurricular involvements including athletics, clubs, and service activities. They should stay involved in those activities which they enjoy since they will afford them opportunities for leadership and colleges look for evidence of consistent involvement and commitment.

The middle of the junior year is the appropriate time to take up in earnest one's post- secondary school plans. This provides the time to reflect, seek advice, and research the options that are available and also to accomplish in a relaxed spirit the entire research and application process.

Before a student gets too involved in the search and application process, they should give some time and thought to **why** it is they want to go to college in the first place and just **what** it is that they hope to gain from college. They might begin with a personal inventory of their academic and personal strengths and weaknesses. What sorts of things come easily to the student and what sorts of things are more challenging? In what ways do they wish to grow and develop? What are their interests at this point in life? They might try to talk with a number of adults in a variety of occupations and ask them what they would do differently if they were starting college all over again.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Atlantis Charter School
991 Jefferson St Ext
Fall River, MA 02721
508-646-6410

CEEB CODE: 220811

COUNSELOR INFORMATION:

| Counselor | e-mail | Extension |
|----------------------|--|------------------|
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FINDING THE RIGHT SCHOOL

Naviance Resources:

The Guidance Department makes extensive use of **Naviance - Family Connection**, a web-based program, which contains information about colleges as well as data regarding students' college application and college admission results.

During the sophomore year, students have been given access to this data through a user name and password system. The student website: (<http://connection.naviance.com/atlantis>) is called Family Connection. Students are encouraged to share their *User Name* and *Password* with their parents so that they too may have access to this information.

Freshman and sophomore students will take personality and interest inventories which direct them to possible majors and careers. Juniors use this program to compile a list of prospective colleges and seniors use this program for the college application process.

College Board Resources:

During their junior year, ACS students have created a free account with the College Board (www.collegeboard.org) and each student has a unique *User-Name* and Password.
Do not create more than one College-Board Account

This account is used to register for SAT Tests and to send SAT scores to colleges. In addition to these services the website can be used to access a variety of resources for college and career planning. Beginning here, students are able to create a plan for college, which includes:

- My Online Score Report*** – results of PSAT Tests already taken
- My SAT Study Plan*** – preparation for SAT tests based on previous PSAT tests
- My Personality*** – a personality profile created in the My Road Program
- My College Matches*** – suggested colleges based on PSAT information
- My Major and Career Matches*** – based on information given on PSAT tests

College information found on the College Board site is based on nationwide statistics while college information in the Naviance Program is based on data for Atlantis Charter School. (A Personality Assessment and an Interest Inventory are taken in the sophomore year as part of the **Naviance - Family Connection Program**. These surveys point to possible college majors and careers, which may be more fully researched.)

SELECTION CRITERIA

Selecting the right school is all about finding a match between you and the institution you attend. The following criteria should be taken into account. You should prioritize these factors and then evaluate which schools best meet your interests.

LOCATION: Are you looking for a school close to home or far away? What type of climate would you prefer? Do you prefer a school in the city, the suburbs or in a rural area? What sort of transportation is available and at what cost?

SIZE: Would you prefer the smaller, more personalized atmosphere of a smaller college or a large university with a great deal of diversity, or something in-between? Does school/class size have an impact on how you study best? A smaller school may be more warm and friendly while a larger school might offer better facilities and a wider selection of courses and activities.

MAJORS AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMS: Does the school offer a major in the area you would like to study and what is the school's reputation for that area of study? Do you want to jump right into a special area of study or would you rather "test the waters" with a variety of courses and see what you're really interested in? What are the strong and weak majors at a particular school?

TYPE OF SCHOOL: (community college, four-year college, liberal arts college, university) A university offers a graduate program (Masters or Doctoral program) beyond a Bachelor's Degree and might allow for some current research in a particular field of study. A liberal arts college provides a curriculum including a broad range of disciplines (natural sciences, social sciences and humanities). In this respect, liberal arts schools differ from those with a highly focused and specialized curriculum such as engineering schools, business schools or music conservatories. A community college offers two-year programs (an Associate Degree) and may be a good place to start if your high school grades are not that strong, if you need an affordable alternative or if you aren't ready to commit yourself to the rigors of a more intense program.

COST: What are the costs involved in attending a particular college? What will be your indebtedness at the end of four years? What is the availability of scholarships, financial aid, loans and work-study programs? Don't rule out the school of your dreams for cost reasons. The college and external sources of support may make your attendance possible. After you are accepted, a phone call to the college's financial aid office may provide you with the advice and guidance you may need.

SELECTIVITY/REQUIREMENTS: What are the admission requirements of the school: Grade Point Average (GPA), standardized test scores? GPA and Test Scores required may be higher for specific majors (e.g. Engineering or Pre-Med). Even if your

scores fall within an acceptable range, you should research the average admission rate at that school. Are you looking to attend a challenging school or one with a more relaxed approach? Be realistic, but don't sell yourself short. While many schools admit a portion of their students each year based on guidelines or formulas, there is always room for admission based on essays and distinctive activities (academic, athletic or artistic). Based on your secondary school record, is a particular school a reach school, a realistic school or a probable school?

REACH SCHOOL

GPA and Standardized Test Scores at these schools are higher than those earned by the student. In addition, at many prestigious colleges, the percentage of students accepted can be quite low.

REALISTIC SCHOOL

The student's GPA and Standardized Test Scores are very much in line with those of a typically admitted student.

PROBABLE SCHOOL

The student's GPA and Standardized Test Scores exceed those of a typically admitted student.

Our Guidance Counselors can provide access to recent college admission data on Naviance Family Connection. Since this is not an exact science, admission results vary from year to year based on the current year's applicant pool. The Guidance Department recommends that the student apply to 3 or 4 Realistic Schools, 1 or 2 Reach Schools and 1 or 2 Probable Schools.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

STUDENT POPULATION: Are you interested in a coed or single sex school? Do you prefer a state school (most students from a single state) or a private school (a more diverse student population)? What is the socio-economic background of most students at the school? How strict are the social regulations at the school?

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: What sports, cultural, social, service activities are available at the school?

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS: What are the residence-halls like? Do they fill up rapidly? Are you guaranteed four years of housing on campus? How available is off campus housing? What are the dining facilities and programs like?

SPECIAL PROGRAMS: Does the school provide services for students with learning disabilities? Are there cooperative programs, internships, independent study, study abroad, 3-2 programs available in certain fields like engineering, ROTC programs?

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Standardized tests are national examinations that allow colleges to compare students using a common instrument of evaluation. By taking the PSAT examination in the sophomore and junior year, the student should be ready to begin taking standardized tests in the spring of their junior year. Additional preparation may be done by using printed review books, computer-based resources and various test preparation workshops and courses. Students should plan to take these tests several times since colleges look at the highest scores achieved on these tests. On the SAT tests, colleges usually combine the highest Critical Reading/Writing and Math scores, even if these scores come from different testing dates.

Don't assume that if you don't have outstanding scores, you don't have any chance of getting into a selective school. Admission committees are more likely to be impressed by consistently strong grades and recommendations than to be either wowed by high scores or overly critical of low ones. However, if your test scores are low, it is advisable to put additional energy and attention into other aspects of your high school work and your application.

Almost all colleges accept the results of either the SAT or ACT tests. **The Guidance Department recommends that you take each of these tests at least once before the end of your junior year.** Before applying to college, consider retaking the test on which you performed better. Use the table on page 14 to compare test results. It is important to note that over 700 Colleges and Universities in the United States do not require standardized test results. A list can be found at (www.fairtest.org). The list includes some of the most competitive colleges in the country. None of your Standardized Test Scores will appear on your ACS Transcript or on any Secondary School Report sent from ACS to colleges, so it is the student's responsibility to release official test scores (SAT and/or ACT) to each college that requires them.

In addition to the SAT (I) Reasoning Test, some schools require the SAT (II) Subject Tests (2 or 3 tests may be required, often including Mathematics and other test(s) of your choice). Some colleges accept the ACT (with Writing) as an alternate to taking the SAT I / SAT II Package of Tests. Check the Admission requirements of the school that you are looking at. More information can be found at:
(http://www.compassprep.com/admissions_req_subjects.aspx)

Since SAT Subject Tests involve specific subject material, it is wise for a student to take these tests as soon as possible after completing the appropriate course work (June is a good date since students have prepared for finals at this time.)

It is the student's responsibility to meet all registration deadlines and to release official score reports to his colleges. **Scores should be sent to colleges prior to the application deadline for each school.**

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDIZED TESTS

SAT Reasoning Test: The Scholastic Aptitude Test is a three hour and forty-five minute test that measures critical reading, mathematical and writing skills that have been developed over many years both in and outside of school. These aptitudes and abilities are related to how well you will do academically in college.

The mathematics (M) section involves multiple-choice and student-produced responses to questions dealing with numbers and operations; Algebra 1, 2 and functions; Geometry, Statistics, Probability and Data Analysis.

The Critical Reading (CR) section involves sentence completions as well as short and long reading passages. Critical reading is combined with the Writing (W) section involves multiple-choice questions on improving sentences and paragraphs and identifying errors.

There is an optional essay test that student sign up for before the test. The essay is to effectively communicate a viewpoint as well as define and support a position.

It is recommended students take the optional writing test at least once.

The SAT does not measure other factors and abilities such as creativity, special talents and motivation that may also help a student to do well in college. Scores for the Critical Reading/Writing and Math sections of the SAT are scaled from 200 – 800 with a composite score (Selection Index) being the sum of these two scores.

The SAT tests might be a better test for you if:

- You did great on the PSAT. The SAT test is very similar.
- You have an excellent vocabulary.
- Your grammar skills are well developed. The writing section examines if you know the difference between standard written English and conversational English.
- If you find it easier to write essays based on examples (from literature or history) rather than argument (based on personal experience or abstract, theoretical arguments).
- If you consider yourself a “quick-thinker” who can see things from many points of view.
- If you are “high-energy” or “impulsive” to the point of being impatient. There are more stops and starts on the SAT which makes it feel as if you are moving along faster than on the ACT.
- If all of your friends are taking the SAT. (You’ll feel more connected to them.)
- If you take the SAT several times, the College Board allows you to choose which scores you would like to send to colleges. (Score Choice Option)

ACT: The “American College Test” examination is a two hour and fifty-five minute multiple-choice examination with sections in English, Math, Science Reasoning and Reading. The test is an achievement test that measures how well you have mastered these areas of study.

Some students do better on this achievement test than they do on the SAT Reasoning Test. Students can also take an optional Writing Test (30 minutes). **Taking this Writing Test is advisable.** Many colleges will accept the ACT with writing in place of the SAT and some schools will also use the ACT in place of the SAT Subject Test requirements.

The ACT Test provides students with another option for standardized tests that every student should consider. A comparison table is available so that results of the two tests can be weighed against each other. (See page 14)

There are no penalty for wrong answers so a student is encouraged to guess at answers even if they're unsure.

The ACT might be a better test for you if:

- Your PSAT or SAT score is inconsistent with your academic performance in school.
- Your vocabulary is not as strong as your reading. You read quickly with good comprehension.
- You are good at writing papers, but haven't had much formal instruction in grammar.
- You prefer writing essays that are argumentative, persuading with ideas even if you lack perfect recall of facts or if you like writing about everyday issues in your life or school.
- You fear that you will "choke" under pressure. You may select only your best ACT score to send to colleges and they will not get a record of every ACT test that you took. The test seems to be more curriculum based, i.e., it's more like an ordinary school test and doesn't require all kinds of test taking strategies.
- All your friends are not taking the ACT. If you're afraid you'll be judged or compared by your friends, they may not even know what a score of 27 on the ACT means.
- You struggle with knowing when to guess or not guess at an answer on the SAT Test, the ACT Test gives you credit for correct answers. Never leave answers blank on the ACT Test; there is no penalty for guessing.

SAT Subject Tests: The SAT Subject Tests are one-hour subject matter tests. Up to three tests can be taken at one test sitting. Some colleges require these tests for admission, others for placement in college classes. Based on these tests, some colleges award credit or exemption from course requirements.

Take these tests as soon as possible after completing the appropriate course material, preferably toward the end of the junior or beginning of the senior year (*even as early as end of the sophomore year for Chemistry*).

Scores are given on a scale from 200 – 800 for each test.

SAT and ACT TEST DATES

SAT TEST DATES

| DATE | TESTS | REGISTRATION DEADLINE | LATE REGISTRATION DEADLINE |
|--|-------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <p>Exact dates /deadline dates for 2020/2021 school year are available at this time. The normal registration deadline is usually one month prior to the test date. The late registration deadline extends the time approximately two weeks but carries a penalty fee.</p> <p>For updates, see the appropriate website: http://collegeboard.org http://www.actstudent.org</p> | | | |

ACS CEEB School Code for all SAT and ACT Tests: 220811

| SAT | ACT | SAT – ACT Score Comparisons | SAT | ACT |
|------|-----|--|------|-----|
| 1600 | 36 | | 1120 | 22 |
| 1590 | 36 | | 1110 | 22 |
| 1580 | 36 | | 1100 | 22 |
| 1570 | 36 | | 1090 | 21 |
| 1560 | 35 | | 1080 | 21 |
| 1550 | 35 | | 1070 | 21 |
| 1540 | 35 | | 1060 | 21 |
| 1530 | 35 | | 1050 | 20 |
| 1520 | 34 | | 1040 | 20 |
| 1510 | 34 | | 1030 | 20 |
| 1500 | 34 | | 1020 | 19 |
| 1490 | 34 | | 1010 | 19 |
| 1480 | 33 | | 1000 | 19 |
| 1470 | 33 | | 990 | 19 |
| 1460 | 33 | | 980 | 18 |
| 1450 | 33 | | 970 | 18 |
| 1440 | 32 | | 960 | 18 |
| 1430 | 32 | | 950 | 17 |
| 1420 | 32 | | 940 | 17 |
| 1410 | 31 | 930 | 17 | |
| 1400 | 31 | 920 | 17 | |
| 1390 | 31 | 910 | 16 | |
| 1380 | 30 | 900 | 16 | |
| 1370 | 30 | 890 | 16 | |
| 1360 | 30 | 880 | 16 | |
| 1350 | 29 | 870 | 15 | |
| 1340 | 29 | 860 | 15 | |
| 1330 | 29 | 850 | 15 | |
| 1320 | 28 | 840 | 15 | |
| 1310 | 28 | 830 | 15 | |
| 1300 | 28 | 820 | 14 | |
| 1290 | 27 | 810 | 14 | |
| 1280 | 27 | 800 | 14 | |
| 1270 | 27 | 790 | 14 | |
| 1260 | 27 | 780 | 14 | |
| 1250 | 26 | 770 | 13 | |
| 1240 | 26 | 760 | 13 | |
| 1230 | 26 | 750 | 13 | |
| 1220 | 25 | 740 | 13 | |
| 1210 | 25 | 730 | 13 | |
| 1200 | 25 | 720 | 12 | |
| 1190 | 24 | 710 | 12 | |
| 1180 | 24 | 700 | 12 | |
| 1170 | 24 | 690 | 12 | |
| 1160 | 24 | 680 | 11 | |
| 1150 | 23 | 670 | 11 | |
| 1140 | 23 | 660 | 11 | |
| 1130 | 23 | 650 | 11 | |

ADMISSION STANDARDS FOR MA COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The minimum weighted GPA required for admission to a four-year Massachusetts University or State College is 3.00. The university/college will recalculate a student's weighted GPA using grades for 17 required academic courses. If this weighted GPA falls below this requirement, the Sliding Scales listed below are used.

Sliding Scale for Applicants to Mass. Universities

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

Sliding Scale for Applicants to a Mass. State College

| Weighted High School GPA | Combined SAT V&M Must Equal or Exceed <i>(ACT Equivalent in Italics)</i> |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 2.51-2.99 | 990 <i>(19)</i> |
| 2.41-2.50 | 1030 <i>(20)</i> |
| 2.31-2.40 | 1070 <i>(21)</i> |
| 2.21-2.30 | 1110 <i>(22)</i> |
| 2.11-2.20 | 1140 <i>(23)</i> |
| 2.00-2.10 | 1180 <i>(24)</i> |

EFFECTIVE FALL 2015, NO APPLICANT WITH A HIGH SCHOOL GPA BELOW 2.00 MAY BE ADMITTED TO A STATE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY CAMPUS.

THE COLLEGE VISIT

Visiting a number of colleges will help you to compare different types of schools and to get a closer look at the schools that you hope to apply to. The spring and summer of the junior year and fall of the senior year are good times for these visits. Tour times can usually be found in College view-books, at the Undergraduate Admissions section of the Home Page of the College or by making a phone call to the college's admissions office. Group visits require little advance notice. These are information sessions at which admission staff members provide candidates and their parents with information about the college and give them a chance to ask questions. It is important for students to register for and to attend the information session and tour since colleges will make note of the student's visit (as an indication of interest level) in their admission file. If you are traveling any distance call the Admissions Office to confirm your visit. Check to see if an interview is suggested and schedule this as well. *Plan about three hours* to visit a college (an information session, a tour, an interview [if necessary] and time to check out parts of the campus that hold special interest for you). You might pay a visit to the Financial Aid or Athletics Office at the time of your visit.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR A PRODUCTIVE VISIT:

- Don't plan more than two college visits for a particular day.
- Be prepared:
 - Read literature about the college and know something about its philosophy and curriculum.
- Be on time:
 - Arrive about fifteen minutes early.
 - Call the Admissions Office if you encounter unavoidable delays.
- Know your GPA, standardized test scores as well as the qualifications that the college is looking for. (If possible, take along an unofficial transcript.)
- Try to visit the campus when classes are in session.
- Tour the campus and form your own opinions about what you see.
- Eat lunch in the cafeteria.
- Talk to a variety of students that you encounter in the course of your visit.
- Explore the neighborhood of the college.
- Read student bulletin boards and publications.
- If you have planned an overnight at the college, attend classes in your area of interest.
 - Stay in a residence hall.
 - Don't expect to find living accommodations like being at home.
 - Note the walking distances around the campus.
 - *Is it centralized or sprawling?*
 - Ask the admissions officer for a business card and when you return home, write him/her a thank you note for helping you with your plans for the future.

SOME QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK IN THE COURSE OF YOUR VISIT:

- What is a “typical” student like?
What do students do on a typical Friday night – Tuesday afternoon - Sunday morning?
How do students get to know each other?
How competitive are athletic teams? Intramurals?
How important are fraternities and sororities?
What is campus spiritual life like?
How large are the classes? Who teaches the classes (professors or graduate assistants?)
What are the most popular majors? When must you declare a major?
How heavy is the academic workload? Is there a core curriculum that must be followed?
What is the academic atmosphere like? How competitive is the student body?
How adequate is the library and how extensive are the computer facilities?
How available are your professors for extra help and advice?
Does each student have an academic advisor? Are they helpful?
Are some dorms better than others? Do many students live off campus and why?
Do freshmen live together? Are there dorm restrictions?
Are you guaranteed four years of on campus housing?
How safe is it on campus? (Admission Offices have statistics available on request.)
Is there an honor code on campus and is it followed?
Are there opportunities to study abroad? What percentage of students study abroad?
Are internships, work-study or 3 – 2 programs available? With what other schools?
What are the most important issues on campus? How active is the student government?
How important are the arts on campus?
Are students politically active and socially aware?
Are there opportunities for internships, research, service and volunteer work?
What do you think is the college’s greatest shortcoming?
What do students complain about?
What kinds of transportation are necessary or advisable?
Can freshman have cars on campus? Are bikes common?
What do you like best about your experience and education at this school?
Where do students come from? How diverse is the student population?
Why did you choose this school? Are you happy with your choice?
Does the college offer assistance with career counseling or job placement after graduation?
What graduate schools or professional schools accept graduates?

Check on the types of financial assistance that are available:

- Grants, loans, work- study, scholarships
What percentage of students receive financial aid?
What is a typical financial aid package for an incoming freshman?
How is the financial health of the school?
What percentage of alumni contributes to the school?

COLLEGE VISIT QUESTIONNAIRE

General Information

College/University _____
Type (Liberal Arts, Catholic, etc.) _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Location: Urban ___ Suburban ___ Rural ___
Costs: Tuition _____ Room & Board _____ Total _____
College Contact Person: _____

Admission Information

Average SAT Reasoning Test Scores: CR _____ M _____
Average ACT Score: Composite Score: _____
SAT Subject Tests: Required? _____ Recommended? _____
Average High School GPA: _____
Other Important Notes:

Academic Life Information

Possible majors I'm considering: _____
What is the average class size? _____
Are there any large lecture classes? _____ If Yes, how many? _____

What support services are available?

What are the computer facilities like?

Which departments are the most popular?

What are the academic requirements to graduate?

Social Life

Anything you want to mention about athletics?

What are the residence halls like?

What is there to do on campus?

What is there to do off campus?

Summary

What did you specifically like about the school?

What did you specifically not like about the school?

NOTES & COMMENTS

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION

Once you have completed your college search and have assembled a list of about five to eight colleges that afford a balance of reach, reasonable and probable schools, you are ready to begin the application process. The application is a form that provides the college with the information they need to review and make a judgment on the appropriateness of your attendance at that school. Since application fees can be expensive and it takes time to complete an application in a neat and thorough fashion, it is wise to plan for a reasonable number of applications. Colleges now prefer that applications be done electronically, but paper applications are sometimes available from the college admissions office, your guidance department or on-line at the college's website. Applications submitted online often involve reduced fees. Many colleges make use of the Common Application. Check application deadline dates and start early. Be sure to give your teachers and guidance counselor adequate time to submit recommendation letters and academic information.

The application will consist of the following sections:

- General Information
- Personal Essay
- High School Transcript
- Secondary School Report (which includes a Counselor Recommendation letter)
- Letters of Recommendation from Teachers
- Standardized Test Scores – *If required*, students must release their scores to the college through the testing agency (ACT or SAT Programs)
- Interview: Colleges may have a required or optional interview with an admission-committee member or an alumni of the school.
- Payment of the Application Fee
- This handbook contains sections that deal with Standardized Tests, the Application Essay and the Interview. A few comments concerning other sections of the application follow at this point:

THE COMMON APPLICATION: Several hundred colleges accept the Common Application. This On-line application is filled out one time. The same basic application is used for every participating institution even if that school has its own application. Each college usually requires a Common Application Supplement where it can request additional college-specific information. The supplements are available on the Common Application website: (www.commonapp.org). If a college uses the Common Application, apply using that application.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION: The application will indicate what the college requires in the way of letters of recommendation. Some will ask for specific teachers (e.g. Mathematics or English), while others will leave it up to you to select the teachers you wish. Most colleges ask for one or two teacher recommendations in addition to a letter from your guidance counselor (which is part of the Secondary School Report). Choose teachers who know you well and who you think will write a strong and detailed letter. It

is wise to choose junior or senior year teachers who know your personality and abilities. They will be better able to describe recent incidents that reflect your approach to academic work and life in general. Discuss with these teachers why you are applying to the colleges you've chosen, what you intend to study and achieve in college. Ask teachers early so that they will have adequate time to write thoughtful letters. Provide the teachers with a copy of your resume, a list of the colleges that you are applying to and application deadline dates. Teachers are given the option of sending their letters to colleges either electronically or by mail. Provide the teacher with stamped/addressed envelopes if required. Do not submit more recommendations than requested unless you feel that someone else who knows you well can provide evidence of special circumstances or talents. Avoid sending letters from influential people who do not know you personally.

TRANSCRIPTS: Your transcript reflects your academic work. What draws the attention of college admission committees is a record of good grades in challenging courses in a broad range of foundational subjects including English, Mathematics, Laboratory Sciences, Foreign Language and Social Studies/History. With the advice of your teachers, guidance counselors and parents, throughout your four years of high school, you should try to take the most suitable and demanding courses available to you. Try to supplement your high school work with courses, internships, jobs, workshops and summer programs at colleges and community colleges. Sustain your effort until the completion of your senior year since mid-year and final transcripts are forwarded to colleges and admission decisions are always contingent upon successful completion of your high school career.

STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES: No records of standardized test scores (SAT and ACT tests) are included on your transcript. Students must have official scores sent to colleges directly from the Testing Corporation. (Some colleges do not require this information). <http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>).

Scores can be sent to colleges by filling in the appropriate codes when filling out information during the on-line registration process or by using the web site for the appropriate testing Corporation. ACT Score Reports will include only the scores from the specific Test Date that is requested. For SAT Tests, students are able to choose which of their SAT scores they would like to be released to their colleges. For the SAT Reasoning Test, (if the student took the SAT's several times), scores for a particular test date may be chosen. For the SAT Subject Tests, the scores for a specific subject test may be selected.

SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING THE APPLICATION:

- Since the admissions committee gets to know you through your application, pay special attention to neatness, spelling, punctuation and grammar on every section of your application.
- Answer all questions in complete sentences and proofread (or have someone else proofread) your application.
- In filling out your application be honest, thorough, thoughtful and attentive to directions.
- Feel free to attach copies of your resume and essay to your application.
- Some On-line applications (such as the Common Application) allow you to upload and paste in copies of your Essay and Resume.

- If you apply on-line and are not given the option of pasting your Resume into your application, you may choose to send it to the college's admission office using an envelope and U. S. mail.
- If you are unsure about whether a college received a piece of your application, call their admissions office for confirmation.

THE APPLICATION ESSAY

The essay provides you with an opportunity to make your application “come alive.” Your personality and character are revealed in your writing so don't try to appear superhuman: be honest and above all, be yourself. Assume that the admissions committee *will* read your essay and that it might be a crucial element in their decision. Admissions counselors are looking for evidence of intellectual depth, creative interests, how well you write, and something special about you that distinguishes you from other applicants. Allow enough time to do a good job on your essay. Begin to develop topics and write rough drafts during the summer of your junior year. Toward the end of your junior year and the beginning of your senior year, your English teachers will work with you on perfecting your application essay. If the essay asks a specific question, write an essay that addresses that question rather than trying to adapt another essay to fit it. If parents and advisors overly edit your essay, its spark of originality will be lost. Reread your essay several times for grammar, spelling and style. A clearly communicated and presented essay will help to convince the committee that you are capable of doing college-level assignments.

Essays generally fall into four basic categories:

- Tell us about yourself. Tell us about a life-shaping event of your life or a person who has influenced your life formation.
- Tell us about an academic or personal interest or activity in which you have participated.
- Tell us why you would like to attend our college. What can we offer you and what will you offer to our student body.
- Show us an imaginative and creative side of your personality.

SOME SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING YOUR ESSAY:

Don't repeat information that is included elsewhere in your application. It might look like you have nothing more or better to say about yourself.

Don't write about general or impersonal topics. The college wants to know about you. Don't use clichés.

Don't use the essay to excuse your shortcomings unless you intend this to be a natural and integral part of your topic. If it's a question of underachievement, find another spot in your application to explain why you have not been working up to your potential.

Don't go to extremes in trying to be “too witty,” “too opinionated,” or “too intellectual.” Write a thoughtful essay, from the bottom of your heart, in the most mature manner possible.

THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

In recent years, with the increasing number of applications being made to colleges, colleges seem to be focusing more and more on group interviews and information sessions. Should the college require or suggest a personal interview (or if you would like to meet with an admissions officer to inform the school of special talents or unique circumstances in your life or to explain your academic record) contact the admissions office to schedule your interview. Some colleges may have local representatives who do interviews. Personal interviews may require several weeks' notice for scheduling.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A PRODUCTIVE INTERVIEW:

- Be on time. Arrive about fifteen minutes early.
- Come neatly dressed and groomed.
- Be prepared.
 - Read up on the school so you don't ask obvious questions that are easily found on the school website.
 - Look over your own application information so you can answer questions about yourself and elaborate on your own academic record and extracurricular activities.
- Meet your interviewer with a firm handshake and maintain eye contact as you talk and listen.
- Listen for "open ended" questions and be willing to speak at some length in making your responses.
 - Don't give clipped "yes" or "no" answers to questions that open the way to dialog.
- When answering questions, don't be afraid to say, "I don't know."
- Be yourself and relax.
- Don't try too hard to seem witty or intelligent.
- Be positive about yourself and listen to what the interviewer is saying.
- Be honest when you answer questions and emphasize your strengths.
- Have some intelligent questions prepared. Take pen and paper for notes. Ask for a business card and send a Thank You note.

SOME TYPICAL TOPICS OR QUESTIONS THAT INTERVIEWERS MIGHT USE:

Tell me about yourself – your interests and high school experiences.

Are you enjoying high school? What are your favorite classes? Why?

What are some of your college goals and hopes for your life?

Why are you considering this college?

How do you think our school will help you achieve your goals?

What other schools do you plan to apply to?

What kind of activities do you enjoy; what involvements are you good at; what kind of things do you struggle with?

Tell me about an event that has directed or re-directed your life?

What is the last book you have read? What is the last movie you have seen?

Is there a current event situation in your school, church or town that you think about or are involved in?

Do you have any questions about our school?

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION:

Examine the College's Website for applications, courses, scholarship and financial aid information. Schedule campus visits and interviews (if required or recommended.)

Decide on approximately five to seven schools that you will apply to. Most should be realistic choices (schools where you meet the admissions criteria) but you might include one or two reach schools and possibly a highly probable school. Don't apply to a school that you would not attend if offered the chance. This is a waste of time, energy and money.

If you have thoroughly investigated several colleges and clearly have a first choice and are highly suited for admission at that school, consider Early Action / Early Decision options if they are available. Some colleges have very unique options such as Early Action Single Choice or Restricted Early Action. It is your responsibility to research and understand these options.

(Careful – **Early Decision is binding**. You may apply to only one school Early Decision.)

Set up a workstation in your home and develop a filing system for information that you receive. Begin a separate file for each college that you decide to apply to. Keep a notebook or computer file with deadlines, test scores, notes from visits and interviews, likes/dislikes, pros/cons, special programs and requirements. (A College Visit Questionnaire is found on page 17 and an Application Checklist is found on page 25 of this booklet.)

Keep paper copies of everything that you send to colleges.

Be sure that you have taken all required standardized tests. (SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Tests if required, ACT with Writing).

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION:

Ask teachers to write letters of recommendation and send them a request on Naviance. Give each teacher a BRAG sheet (found in guidance office) and a list of colleges and deadline dates for each application. If a teacher chooses to send recommendations by mail, give the teacher a stamped/addressed envelope for each college with ACS as the return address.

Students are able to select which SAT scores they would like to release to their colleges (Score Choice Option). ACT Score Reports include only the scores from the specific Test Date that is requested. Some colleges no longer require standardized test scores. It is your responsibility to decide whether or not to have your scores sent to these schools.

(SAT Scores: <http://collegeboard.org>) - (ACT Scores: <http://actstudent.org>).

Your Standardized Test Scores (SAT or ACT) will not appear on your Transcript. Release your test scores, i.e., request that the testing agency send official score reports directly to your colleges.

If you are using the Common Application for any of your college applications you will need to **set up a Common Application Account** (www.commonapp.org). After doing this, remember your User Name and Password and go to Family Connection, Naviance, sign in, and in the "Colleges to which I am applying" Section, fill out the FERPA (Family Education Rights

and Privacy Act) Form which allows Atlantis to send your Transcript to your colleges. You need to enter your Common Application User Name and Password on the FERPA Form.

Complete your application. Colleges prefer that this be done on-line. Use the Common Application whenever possible. As soon as possible, in Naviance – Family Connection, inform your guidance counselor of the colleges that you will apply to. You will do this by moving your colleges from the Prospective List to the Active Application List. Give your guidance counselor at least two weeks to write your letter of recommendation; to create the secondary school report form and to assemble your transcript information. This is particularly important if you will be making an early application (deadlines are ordinarily November 1 or November 15). Aim to have all your applications ready by Thanksgiving-time.

As soon as possible, in your Naviance List of Active Applications, **request transcripts** to be sent to your colleges.

AFTER SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION:

- If you have a first choice college, write a letter to the college admissions office informing them of the reasons for your high interest in that college.
- As soon as possible (preferably at least one week before the application deadline date), apply for CSS PROFILE Financial Aid for schools that participate in this program. Information can be found at <http://collegeboard.org/profile>
- After January 1, submit the FAFSA Financial Aid form. (The form is available on-line in late
- December but cannot be filed before January 1.)
- First quarter grades will be sent to your colleges from the guidance office automatically, once these grades are available.
- Mid-year grades will automatically be sent to each school that you applied to.

As you receive notification from colleges concerning your application, please notify your guidance counselor of each decision that has been made (accepted, wait-listed, refused, deferred), so that we can know where you stand with regard to your college plans and use the information

- to guide you and future students.
By May 1, notify the college that you plan to attend of your decision. Notify other colleges that offered you admission of your decision to attend another college.

ONE FINAL TRANSCRIPT will be sent to the college that you have decided to attend. Be sure to notify the Guidance Office of your choice.

For colleges that use the Common Application, be sure to list each college in the “My Colleges” section of the Common Application.

IMPORTANT: If you are applying to colleges that use the Common Application, but you choose to make use of an alternate application form such as an **Express Application, VIP Application** or a **college’s own application form** or **any form other than the Common Application**, you will still need to list that college in the “My Colleges” section of the Common Application and complete the Common Application and the Common Application Supplement for that college. If you do not do so, colleges will be unable to receive your high school transcript and supporting materials from our guidance office.

COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

COLLEGE INFORMATION:

COLLEGE NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

APPLICATION DEADLINES:

PHONE: _____ FAX: _____

E-MAIL: _____ CONTACT: _____

- _____ Regular
- _____ Early Action
- _____ Early Decision (binding)
- Essay Completed
- Resume completed and attached to application
- SAT/ACT Scores released to this College (if required)

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

(Teachers asked and given resume and list of due date for application.)

- Teacher #1: _____
- Teacher #2: _____
- Write thank you note to teachers for taking the time to write your letter of recommendation.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Verify your Naviance Family Connection User Name and Password

Create a Common Application Account – User Name and Password

Complete the FERPA agreement In Family Connection – “Colleges I’m Applying to.”

In Family Connection – Move prospective colleges to “Active Applications”

Request Transcripts to be sent for each Active Application College

TRANSCRIPT REQUEST

SUBMITTED TO GUIDANCE COUNSELOR:

APPLICATION FEE: \$ _____

- Check sent with application
- Credit card information supplied
- Common Application Supplement submitted if necessary.
- Profile Form for Financial Aid completed (if applicable)
- FAFSA Form for Financial Aid completed (earliest filing date Jan. 1)

NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE

Many colleges are affiliated with athletic associations that have their own rules, regulations and eligibility requirements. One of the best known is the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Division I and Division II colleges can offer scholarships; Division III colleges (mostly smaller, private colleges) cannot. Before an athlete can play a sport or receive a scholarship at a Division I or II college he must meet NCAA's academic requirements. Division III athletes do not need to meet NCAA's academic requirements.

Athletes who wish to attend a Division I college must have at least a 2.0 GPA in a specified number of core courses. They must also have the required SAT or ACT score. ACT/SAT requirements for Division I schools are based on a sliding scale. The higher the core GPA, the lower the test score required. Division II athletes need a 2.0 GPA in their core courses; a minimum score SAT score of 820 (Critical Reading + Math) or a minimum Sum Score of 68 on the ACT Test. In the spring of the junior year, athletes should take the SAT and/or ACT examinations, release their scores to the NCAA Clearinghouse (the NCAA Code Number is 220840) and register with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse toward the end of their junior year. Registration is to be done on-line at the NCAA websites:

(<http://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter>) or at (<http://www.eligibilitycenter.org>)

Eligibility requirements for Division I and II schools can be found on the first NCAA website indicated above. This website is quite extensive, but requirements are located in a section titled "Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete."

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid that is available from colleges is never meant to cover the entire cost of college tuition. It comes in the form of grants, loans and work-study programs. Colleges may also have a variety of merit scholarships available. When visiting a college, it might be worthwhile to make a stop at the financial aid office. You might ask such questions as:

- What types of financial aid are available?
- What is a typical financial aid package for an incoming freshman?
- What percentage of students receives financial aid?
- What are the requirements for maintaining the aid package from year to year?

All colleges have federal funds available for student aid. In addition, some schools have their own institutional sources for financial aid. Formal application must be made to receive either type of assistance. To be considered for Federal fund assistance all families must fill out a form called FAFSA. To be considered for institutional sources of financial aid, one would need to fill out a form called PROFILE (if the college participates in this program) or a Financial Aid Application for the specific institution. Check about these requirements with the specific college's Financial Aid Office.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This application form is available on-line www.fafsa.ed.gov on October 1st. Students and parents will need to make a FAFSA ID. Your FSA ID gives you a single username and password (that you choose) to sign the FAFSA and access various U.S. Department of Education websites. Students and parents need their own FSA IDs. If you have more than one child attending college, you can use the same FSA ID to sign all applications, but each child must have his or her own.

PROFILE: The Application for this program is available in the fall of the senior year. You only need to use this form if you are applying to a school that participates in this program. Participating schools are listed on the application form or on-line at www.collegeboard.org in the **Paying for College, CSS PROFILE** section. A fee is charged for each school that you are applying to that participates in this program. It is recommended that you submit the Profile Form a few weeks before the deadline application date for each college.

Check with the financial aid office of the college to see if the school has its own application for institutional financial aid. Use the "Net Price Calculator" on the college website to get an estimate of financial aid.

Be sure to check financial aid deadline dates and to meet these deadlines.

Missing the deadline might cost the loss or significant reduction in the aid that might be granted.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Financial aid is available from colleges and universities as well as from federal and state governments based on a family's need determined by several different assessment methods. Additional aid may be secured by filing applications for suitable scholarships for which the student qualifies. Several resources are available to assist in researching and identifying appropriate scholarships, internships and loans.

- The guidance department publishes information on scholarships that have been sent to the Guidance Office, seniors will have an assembly about applying for scholarships.
- A variety of web resources are listed beginning on page 29 of this booklet.

Some recommendations regarding scholarships:

- Copy all scholarship and financial aid documents that you submit and keep them on file so that you can refer to them if any questions arise.
- Beware of scholarship scams.

APPLICATION/ADMISSION TERMINOLOGY

REGULAR DECISION: This is the application process in which a student submits an application by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time, not later than April 15.

EARLY DECISION: Is a plan for making application for admission early (around November 1) in the senior year and receiving notification in late December of the senior year. Using this option, the student makes a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. (An Early Decision contract must be signed.) While pursuing admission under an Early Decision Plan, students may apply to other institutions but may have only one Early Decision Application pending at any time. The Early Decision Application supersedes all other applications. Immediately upon acceptance of an Early Decision offer, the student must withdraw all other applications and make no subsequent applications. Should a student who applies for financial aid not be offered an award that makes attendance possible, the student may decline the offer of admission and be released from the Early Decision commitment.

EARLY ACTION: Early Action is the application process in which students make application to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Students who are admitted under Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution's offer or to submit a deposit until the regular reply date (i.e., not prior to May 1.) A student may apply to other colleges without restriction.

EARLY ACTION SINGLE CHOICE, RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION: The student applies early and learns of the college's decision by mid-December. The student is not obligated to respond to the offer until May 1. In this program, the student may NOT apply to any other school's early action or early decision program. Each college defines these choices slightly differently. **Read the description very carefully.** The student is often required to sign an agreement to abide by the requirements of the choice made.

ROLLING ADMISSION: This is the application process in which beginning on a specified date, an institution reviews applications as they are received and renders admission decisions to students throughout the admission cycle.

DEFERRED: An early action or early decision application may be deferred. This means that the application has been placed in the regular decision pool. This is often done when a college would like to see additional information such as future marking period grades or additional standardized test scores before making their decision.

WAIT-LIST: This is an admission decision option used by institutions to protect against shortfalls in enrollment. These are made necessary since students make multiple applications and may be granted admission to several schools. A student on the wait-list is not initially offered or denied admission, but is offered the possibility of admission at a later date, usually after the institution's normal admission cycle is completed. Students must be notified of their status as soon after May 1 as is possible. While on the wait-list, deposits are not required.

ON-LINE RESOURCES COLLEGE SEARCHES AND INFORMATION

College Board and SAT Program
ACT
Princeton Review Family Connection Peterson's Guide
U. S. College Search
Fairtest Colleges
College View
Colleges that require SAT Subject Tests
Mass. Schools
Business Schools Campus Security Statistics
Common Application
NCAA Clearinghouse

<http://www.collegeboard.org>
<http://www.actstudent.org> or <http://www.act.org>
<http://www.review.com/>
<http://connection.naviance.com/xbhs>
<http://www.petersons.com/>
<http://www.uscollegesearch.org> <http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>
(Colleges that don't require SAT/ACT Test Scores)
<http://collegeview.com/>
http://www.compassprep.com/admissions_req_subjects.aspx
<http://www.massmentor.edu>
<http://www.bschool.com/>
<http://www.ope.ed.gov/security/>

APPLICATIONS AND ESSAYS

<http://www.commonapp.org/>

COLLEGE ATHLETICS

<http://www.eligibilitycenter.org> <http://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter>

SCHOLARSHIP AND FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES

Fast WEB
Financial Aid Information Financial Aid Search
Sallie Mae
Opportunities for Minorities
<http://www.fastweb.com/>
<http://www.finaid.org/>
http://www.yahoo.com/education/financial_aid
<http://www.salliemae.com/>
<http://scholarships.fatomei.com/minorities.html>
College Board Fund Finder MA Department of Education
College View
Peterson's Education Center
<http://www.collegeboard.org/>
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/>

<http://collegeview.com/>

<http://www.petersons.com/>

Scholarships <http://www.usnews.com/>

Scholarships <http://www.collegeispossible.org/>

U.S. Dept. of Education U.S. Student Financial Aid Nat. Assn. Student Fin. Aid Admin.

<http://www.ed.gov/>

http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student_guide/index.html

<http://www.nasfaa.org/>

FAFSA <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

FAFSA PIN #

FAFSA4CASTER

<http://www.pin.ed.gov>

<http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov>

PROFILE <http://www.collegeboard.org/profile>

Federal School Codes MA Edu. Fin. Authority Merit Scholarships New England Tuition Break

Occupational Outlook Handbook Employment for The Future Summer Opportunities Careers in Math & Science

My College QuickStart (need account)

<http://ifap.ed.gov/ifap/fedSchoolCodeList.jsp>

<http://www.mefa.org/>

<http://www.Meritaid.com>

<http://www.nebhe.org/tuitionbreak>

(Used for FAFSA)

CAREER GUIDANCE

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>

<http://www.bls.gov/emp/>

<http://www.mystudentedge.com/summerop/code/ssector.asp>

<http://www.careercornerstone.org>

<http://collegeboard.com/quickstart>