

Dedham High School Guidance Department

# Post-Secondary Planning Guide

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Dear Students and Parents,

The counselors in the Dedham High School Guidance Department have put together this Post-Secondary Planning Guide as a resource for you during this busy yet exciting endeavor. Determining what you will do after graduation is not a decision that should be taken lightly. But with focus and an understanding of the process, you will be able to leave DHS comfortable that you know the direction in which you are headed.

This guide is not meant to be read as a book, from cover to cover. Different sections will be more applicable to you at different times during the process. Review the table of contents and focus on the sections that are most relevant to you on any given day. By the time you graduate, hopefully you will have reviewed the entire guide.

Pay special attention to the "Did You Know" sections on the sides of many pages. As well, utilize the worksheets that are included for your reference and convenience.

While this guide is meant to provide you with the most often sought-after information, in no way is it the only place you should seek post-secondary planning advice. We hope you find this guide useful but also encourage you to meet with your counselor for continued support. We are available to help you in person throughout the process and are happy to provide assistance and additional information.

Students and parents should work together during this process. Please take the time to review this guide together. If the process is given its due diligence, we are certain that you will be pleased with your results upon graduation!

Sincerely,

The Dedham High School Guidance Staff

**Special Note: This guide is currently being updated. Please refer back later for information on standardized testing, learning disabilities, athletics and financial aid.**

# Table of Contents

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Post-Secondary Opportunities                 | 4-5   |
| Factors to Consider when Applying to College | 5-6   |
| Finding Colleges                             | 7     |
| Myths About the College Selection Process    | 8     |
| Personal Contact with Colleges               | 9     |
| Questions for Admissions Representatives     | 10-11 |
| Visiting Colleges                            | 12    |
| College Visit Summary Sheet                  | 13    |
| Applying to College                          | 14    |
| The Application File                         | 15-16 |
| Teacher Recommendations                      | 16    |
| Essays                                       | 17    |
| High School Resume                           | 18    |
| College Admissions Options                   | 19    |
| Transcript Request Procedure                 | 20-21 |
| Application Checklist                        | 22    |
| Interviews                                   | 23-24 |
| The Response                                 | 25    |
| Senioritis                                   | 26    |
| Junior/Senior Planner                        | 27-30 |
| Glossary                                     | 31-33 |

Did You Know?

# You're about to graduate! Now what?

## College

“College” comes in many shapes and sizes. Your expectations of the college experience may be shaped by stories from your parents or siblings. It could be shaped by information you’ve received from college admissions officers or your high school. Maybe it’s from what you’ve heard from older friends or seen on television. No matter your unique perception of “college”, it is important to understand all the various college options that exist.

Many “four-year” schools also offer Associate’s degrees.

After a Master’s, students can continue on to earn a doctorate. The most common is called a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

Many vocational careers can provide you with a well-paying job very quickly after high school.

### **Four-Year Colleges and Universities:**

When students think of college, this is typically what they picture. At a four year college, students can earn a Bachelor’s Degree. Typically, students will earn a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or a Bachelor of Science (BS), depending on the major pursued. Despite being known as “four-year” schools, students can expect to earn their degrees in anywhere from four to six years.

**Two-Year Colleges:** Students attend two-year colleges (also known as Community or Junior Colleges) for many different reasons. But the bottom line is that these schools can provide just as good an education as a four-year college to any motivated student. Two-year colleges offer Associate’s degrees, either Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS), typically earned from completing a two-year program of studies. Whether or not you complete your degree, many of the credits you earn may be applied toward a bachelor’s degree at a four-year college. Students with excellent grades can transfer to four-year colleges after any given semester or upon completion of their Associate’s degree.

**Graduate Schools:** Students who are interested in pursuing professional careers often need to earn a Master’s degree for

initial job eligibility. Master’s degrees can also be advantageous for individuals looking for promotions or advanced positions in their careers. After earning a Bachelor’s degree, students can pursue a Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MS), Master of Fine Arts (MFA), Master of Public Administration (MPA), Master of Business Administration (MBA) or Master of Education (MEd), just to name a few. Lawyers earn a Juris Doctorate (JD) while medical doctors earn an MD. Depending on the degree sought, a Master’s degree can be completed in anywhere between one to three years of full-time study.

## Vocational training

Students who are not interested in attending college, but who are seeking advanced training for a specialized job often pursue technical-vocational training. Some of these careers require the student to complete a certificate program while other careers require an apprenticeship with a master in the field. Some common careers that are pursued through vocational training are: electricians, carpenters, plumbers, and cosmeticians and massage therapists.

## Work

Some students may want to pursue a career immediately, perhaps by starting their own business, scouring the help-wanted ads or turning their current part-time job into a future full-time job. Some companies will provide you with on-the-job paid training to help you advance in the company. And by choosing to work immediately after high school, you still have the option of pursuing college or vocational training in the future.

## Military

By joining the military, you can train in one of hundreds of different careers, giving you

practical skills for a job after discharge. Students can also earn money towards college tuition through the GI Bill. Additionally, some students may be interested in applying to a military academy, such as West Point or Annapolis. As these academies, students train to become officers in that specific branch of the military.

## Gap-Year

A gap-year is exactly what it sounds like: a year off between high school and college. While still not a very common practice, it is becoming an increasingly popular option for

students who are looking for different experiences prior to enrolling in college. Many colleges, including Harvard, encourage students to take a gap-year (see [www.admissions.college.harvard.edu/apply/time\\_off/index.html](http://www.admissions.college.harvard.edu/apply/time_off/index.html)). But a gap-year is not for sitting around and relaxing. Gap-year activities can include working full-time, traveling the world, taking courses at a preparatory school, or anything else you can think of to enrich your life. A gap-year is not for everyone. If you are considering it, be sure to research understand all your options, and talk to your family and counselor about your thoughts.

Did You Know?

## Factors to consider when applying to colleges

With thousands of colleges across the United States, Canada and other countries, it can be a daunting task to find the college that is right for you. Think about the following general characteristics that will exist at each college in different ways. Chances are you will be able to narrow your list to a manageable number by answering some questions for yourself. In the end, you'll be happy going to any of the colleges you are accepted to!

### Competitiveness and Entrance Difficulty

Many students will look at a college's competitiveness and entrance difficulty as an indicator of whether or not they will be admitted. The competitiveness of a college can be determined by reviewing its acceptance rate. The most competitive colleges have acceptance rates below 50% of all applicants, but there are fewer than 100 colleges out of thousands across the country with rates that low. The competitiveness of a college may indicate which types of students are attracted to the school and ulti-

mately enroll, but it does not necessarily translate directly to its quality of education.

Entrance difficulty for a college is unique for each student. It is always relative to the student's academic performance and personal achievements throughout high school. Most students will apply to schools in each of three varying degrees of entrance difficulty: Reach, Target and Safety.

**Reach:** A "reach" school is one at which you would fall within the bottom portion of students that are most often accepted. Your grades and entrance exam scores will likely not be as high as most students that get into this type of school.

**Target:** A "target" school is one at which your academic record is similar to the majority of students that are typically accepted. When the college admissions officers describe the type of students they look for, they would sound like they are describing you.

**Safety:** A "safety" school is one at which you would fall within the very top portion

On average, students apply to six to eight colleges. One or two should be reaches, one or two should be safeties, and the rest should be targets

## Did You Know?

of the students that are most often accepted. Your grades and entrance exam scores will likely be significantly higher than most students that get into this type of school.

Smaller colleges might offer a more personalized education where you can get to know most of the students and faculty. Larger institutions might offer a greater variety of academic opportunities and often have more elaborate facilities.

## Location

Colleges are located all across the country, and you will need to consider how close or far away you would like to attend school. You may want to attend a local school in the greater Boston area, one that is easy to drive to and from home. You might consider a school that is a few hours away, one where you can plan a weekend trip home with little difficulty, but not necessarily every weekend. Or you might decide on a school that is far enough to require air-travel to and from home. Whatever your preferences, be sure to speak honestly with your family about your thoughts.

Most students change their majors at least once while in college.

## Campus Setting

Wherever in the country (or even abroad) your college is located, the campus setting can play a big role in the school's personality. Many schools are urban, located within a city. Other schools are suburban, close to a city but not right in the middle of one. Many more are rural, far away from the next town.

Don't limit the colleges you apply to solely on cost, but still consider applying to a "Financial Safety" school, one that you know will be easier to afford.

## Size

Colleges and universities differ in size of enrollment from several hundred students to tens of thousands. Obviously, there can be tremendous differences, both educationally and socially, in attending different sized institutions. There are advantages to small, medium and large sized colleges. The important thing is to decide what you want.

## Major

Your college major is a concentration of courses that are all connected under one broad subject. They can be general subjects you have taken in high school, such as mathematics or history. They can also be in more specific areas that you might never have heard of, such as women's studies, anthropology or kinesiology. If you already know exactly what subject you would like to study in college, make sure any school you choose offers a major in that area. If you know of a few areas you might want to study but have not yet decided, be sure to choose colleges that offer options in all your interest areas, just in case. And if you have no idea what you might major in, don't worry at all. Almost all colleges allow students to apply "undecided" and choose a major after the first few semesters. As well, colleges that require you to state a major on your application often allow you to change your mind at a later date.

## Cost

The cost of higher education is a serious consideration, but it should not be the major determining factor where you will attend. All colleges and universities have financial aid programs to help meet the cost of attending. There are also opportunities for Federal Aid and State Aid as well as thousands of scholarship opportunities. Make your decision on the factors listed above, and then see how the colleges you select can help you meet the costs.

# Which Colleges Should You Apply To?

College searching websites give students the chance to find colleges based on the general factors listed above as well as many more specific characteristics. You can even match colleges that offer majors to prepare you for specific careers. Three of the websites Dedham students most often use are:

**Naviance/Family Connection:** Naviance is a comprehensive tool that allows students to not only research colleges across the country, but gives students an idea of how they may fare when compared to previous applicants from DHS. You can use Naviance to find new colleges, keep track of ones you are interested in, sign up for college visits at DHS, build your student resume, and a wide variety of other college and career exploration activities. Each student at DHS has his or her own unique profile to save information. To log in, visit [www.connection.naviance.com/dedham](http://www.connection.naviance.com/dedham). Under "E-Mail" enter your numeric DHS Student ID. For first time users, the password is "naviance" in all lower case letters. You can then change your password and start using Naviance!

**Massachusetts Career Information System:** The MCIS is a free online resource that is maintained by the state of Massachusetts. It can be found at [www.masscis.intocareers.org](http://www.masscis.intocareers.org). Similar to Choices, you can sign in for general access first and then create your own profile for continued use.

**College Board:** College Board is the company that produces the SAT. By creating a profile on the College Board site at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), students will have access to another fantastic college search engine. You can even use your SAT scores directly in your search.

**College guide books** are also a great way to start or supplement your college search. Some books provide statistical information on every single college in the United States. It will include average grades and SAT scores, admissions policies, popular and available majors, and financial aid information, just to name a few things. Other books may provide more narrative descriptions of the academics, campus setting, and social life at the school. There are also books that cover specific topics, such as a particular region of the country or schools for students with special needs. The DHS Guidance office has many of these guide books available for student use. You can also find them at the public library or any major book store.

But for the most information on an individual college, **go directly to its own website.** Visit [www.clas.ufl.edu/au](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/au) for a complete index of American colleges and universities. Then check out this helpful [College Website Navigation Guide](#) to make the most of your review of college websites.

## Don't Limit Yourself!

While the above ways can help you find a great list of colleges, there is no wrong way to search for schools. There is no wrong reason to favor a school either, such as having friends in attendance or really liking the basketball team. But while you shouldn't limit your search, you should also not limit your choices based on only one or two factors. Make sure you thoroughly research all the schools you like and only apply to the ones you will truly be happy attending.

# Myths About the College Selection Process

**Learning about colleges is an arduous task, one to which many students simply do not allocate sufficient time and thought. The beginning of the college selection process is also filled with many myths and misconceptions. The most common myths are:**

**Myth #1: There is One Perfect College for Me** - Understanding that there is no one perfect college for you but several good alternatives will make the application process more exciting. If you narrow your sights to only one college, you may spend too much time worrying about getting into that particular school. This will prevent you from making a systematic search for a variety of institutions where you would be happy.

**Myth #2. I Need to Decide on a Career Before I Can Choose a College** - The average college student changes majors two or three times in the course of four years of college and most college graduates change careers three to five times in their lifetime.

**Myth #3. We Can Only Afford a Low-Priced College** - Do not let initial costs alone determine your future. Too often students rule out some colleges because the total cost appears to be more than the family can afford. This may not be the case when all resources of financial aid are explored. Private colleges, in order to attract students from all income levels, offer significant amounts of financial aid, and in the long run, may be more affordable than a less expensive public institution.

**Myth #4. Most Students Get Rejected by the College of Their Choice** - Not so! Over 92% of all students go to their first or second choice college. Searching for a variety of colleges where your needs can be met and ensuring that the colleges to which you apply include different levels of selectivity can increase your chances for acceptance and, ultimately, your happiness.

**Myth #5. Investigating Colleges is an Unpleasant Chore** - Looking at colleges should be part of an exciting search for your future. It is wise to approach the admissions process with optimism and excitement for two reasons:

1. It will make the process more interesting.
2. Your enthusiasm and optimism will show in your application essays.

Some components of the research process can be fun as well, such as the campus visit. The selection and application process is also a time for self-discovery that may prove to be more beneficial than selection of a particular college.

**Myth #6. I've Never Heard of This College, so it Can't be Any Good** - Most people know very little about colleges. The average self-educated individual can probably name only 100 of the 3,000 plus colleges and these tend to be the older eastern colleges, the large state universities, those with outstanding athletic teams and those that happen to be near their home. It is important to remember that a college, which might be a good match for you may be one which is unknown to you now. And some of the schools you have heard the most about may prove not to be a good match for you. Try to keep an open mind throughout the entire process.

# Personal Contact with Colleges

Did You Know?

Making personal contact with colleges and admissions representatives is a great way to collect information on colleges while showing your potential motivation to attend the school at the same time. Admissions officers note each time they meet or speak with students directly. You might be able to tip a decision in your favor if the admissions staff can put a face or a voice with your application. Here are some ways you can make personal contact with colleges and collect a wealth of information:

**Call the Admissions Office:** Some times the best way to have a question answered quickly is to call and speak with your admissions representative directly. When you call, speak confidently. Introduce yourself to whomever answers the phone and be polite. Ask if you can speak to or leave a message for the admissions representative that will review your file. And remember, almost any staff member in the admissions office can answer general questions about the college's admissions process.

**Visit the College:** Most colleges are open for visits every day of the week. You can sign up for a tour of the school or schedule an appointment to meet with a member of the admissions staff. Colleges also hold Open Houses on selected dates throughout the year for prospective applicants. These usually consist of a tour and a presentation by the admissions staff.

**Attend a Regional Open House:** Some colleges that are located outside the greater Boston area may hold a Regional

Open House. Admissions officers will hold formal presentations about the college at a venue in the local area for students that are unable to visit the college itself. Call the admissions office of a school or check its website for information on Regional Open Houses.

**Attend a College Fair:** Hundreds of colleges from around the country attend college fairs. Often, the representative who will review your application directly will be present to give you information and answer any questions you have. This is a great opportunity to learn about schools in a quick but personal way. Plus, it's one of the easiest ways to meet admissions representatives face to face, one on one. Every spring and fall semester, The Education Cooperative sponsors a college fair in the local region. For upcoming dates and times, visit <http://www.tec-coop.org/col-fairs.html>.

**Meet an admissions representative at Dedham High School:** Throughout the fall, representatives from many colleges visit DHS to meet students who are interested in attending their schools. You'll get the same information you might find at a college fair, but you'll also have much more time to have a conversation with the rep and ask specific questions. Sometimes, they will even review your grades and offer suggestions on how to improve your chances of getting in! For a complete list of colleges visiting DHS, and to sign up for a session, log in to Naviance/Family Connection.

Feel free to call the admissions rep if you want to let them know something new since submitting your application.

April vacation of your junior year is a great time to visit colleges. You'll be able to see the campus while classes are in session and get a true feel for what the school is like.

## Great Questions to Ask an Admissions Rep

While on campus during a visit, you may have the opportunity to meet with an admissions counselor. Sometimes, this is a specific feature during an open house. Other times, you may want to schedule a meeting ahead of time on your own. But if you do have this opportunity, use it wisely and be prepared. While it may only be an informal informational session, it also could be your first chance to make a lasting impression on the people who will review your application file.

### **Admissions Policies**

1. What high school courses are required?
2. Are entrance tests required? Which ones?
3. What range of scores is accepted?
4. Does the college require a certain grade point average or rank in class?
5. Will my activities in school be considered?
6. Is there an essay on the application?
7. Is there an early decision or early action plan?
8. On what basis are applicants accepted?
9. Are personal interviews or letters of recommendation required?
10. Are there special requirements for certain majors?
11. What percent of applicants are accepted?
12. Can admission denials be appealed?
13. What are the application deadlines?

### **About the College**

1. Where is the college located (city, suburb, small town, rural)?
2. What is the surrounding community like?
3. Is there public transportation available?
4. What meal plans are offered?
5. Is there a cafeteria for commuting students?
6. Is the college public, private, church affiliated?
7. What is the current student enrollment?
8. What special or unique programs are

offered?

9. Does the college have general education or course distribution requirements? What are they?
10. Does the college have special programs for transfer students?
11. What is the academic calendar (semesters, quarters)?

### **Student Population**

1. Where do the majority of students come from?
2. Do most students commute or live on campus?
3. What types of student activities are available?
4. Are there sororities and fraternities on campus?
5. What athletic programs are available?
6. Is housing available/guaranteed for freshmen?

### **Social Life**

1. What is the average age of students?
2. What is the male-to-female ratio?
3. What percent of the students reside on campus?
4. Are dorms coed or single-sex?
5. How many students live in a dormitory room?
6. Is this a “suitcase college” where all the students leave on weekends?
7. What are the procedures for selecting a roommate?

Any of these questions are also great to ask when meeting with admissions reps at a high school visit, at an open house, at a college fair, in an email or on the phone.

## More Questions to Ask an Admissions Rep

8. What are some of the rules and regulations that govern campus and dormitory life?

### **Academics**

1. What is the average class size? Largest? Smallest?
2. What is the student/faculty ratio?
3. How many students in last year's freshman class returned for their sophomore year?
4. What was the GPA for the freshman class last year?
5. Does the school have a Counseling Office?
6. What is the college's procedure for student orientation, class placement and scheduling? Are classes guaranteed?
7. How are faculty advisors assigned to students?
8. What types of additional services are provided by the school at no additional cost to the student (e.g. tutoring, career and personal counseling, developmental reading, study skills workshops or job placement)?
9. Does the school give credit for Advanced Placement examinations?

10. How many students complete a degree?
11. Do most students graduate in four years?
12. What are the most popular majors?
13. Are students taught by full-time faculty members, graduate assistants, or a combination of the two?
14. How up-to-date are your computers and instructional equipment?

### **College Cost**

1. What are the costs for tuition? Room and board? Are there other fees?
2. How much do costs increase from year to year?
3. Is there a difference in cost for in-state and out-of-state students?
4. Are accepted students required to place deposits for tuition and housing? Are these refundable?
5. By what date must an accepted student decide whether he or she will attend?
6. Are deposits required each year for returning students?
7. Is there a payment plan?

## Visiting Colleges

Visiting college campuses is an important part of the college planning process. It helps the students form their own opinions regarding the academics, social life and living environment of a college or university. The best way for you to learn about the educational programs, faculty, facilities, atmosphere and spirit of a college is to visit the campus when the college is in session. Visiting schools in the spring of your junior year is a good time to start. If you cannot visit the campus during the school year, summertime is another possibility.

Take advantage of being on a college campus and discover as much as you can on

your campus visit. Test the claims made in the brochures. See for yourself how good the library will be for your particular interest. Will you be able to talk to the professors? What sports programs will be open to you? Does the social atmosphere match your personality? How is the food in the cafeteria? Did you see the residence halls?

Most colleges offer student-led tours every day and admissions open houses at least one a week. Check out your college's webpage or call the undergraduate admissions office to get a schedule and reserve a spot, if necessary.

### Did You Know?

#### Suggestions for Your College Visit

1. Pick up a copy of the latest newspaper.
2. Find a professor and get his/her perspective.
3. Meet a coach if you are interested in a sport.
4. Meet the head of an activity or interest you want to pursue in college.
5. Eat lunch on campus.
6. After the tour, walk around on your own - even talk to some students

## Questions to Ask Your Tour Guide

1. What's the largest class you've had here?
2. Who teaches your classes? (Graduate assistants or professors?)
3. Is there a required core curriculum? How restrictive is it?
4. How adequate is the library? Are you able to get the books you need when you want them?
5. When do you have to declare your major? What are the most popular majors?
6. Tell me about housing. Are some dorms much better than others? Do many students live off campus?
7. How competitive is the student body? Do students seem to work primarily for grades? What is the attitude toward working hard?
8. Have you been in any faculty homes since you've been here? How available are your professors?
9. Can you tell me anything first-hand about the English or History departments?
10. What's the biggest issue on campus right now?
11. What are the biggest issues in national and international politics? Are students politically active?
12. What percentage of students study abroad at some time?
13. What impact do fraternities/sororities have here? Athletics?
14. What happens here on weekends? Do many students leave campus on the weekend?
15. How active is student government?
16. Are the arts supported here? Which areas are strong?
17. What do you think is the greatest shortcoming of this college?
18. What do you like best about your experience and education here?
19. Is this a diverse community? Where do students come from?
20. If you could attend another college now, where would you go? Why?
21. Why did you choose this school? To what others did you apply?

# College Visit Summary Sheet

Upon completion of your visit, use this form to take notes from your visit. Do this for each college visited, and then compare your summaries for each. This will help keep your thoughts fresh in your mind before the campuses begin to all seem the same.

Name of College \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Visit \_\_\_\_\_ Person met with \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Student Body

(Impressions of the student body in terms of appearance, style, friendliness, degree of interest and enthusiasm, diversity of social, religious and ethnic background.)

## 2. Academic Factors

(How good are the facilities for academic pursuits? How varied is the curriculum? How strict or flexible are the requirements?)

## 3. Campus Facilities and Social Life

(How are the residence halls, dining halls, student center, Internet capabilities and athletic facilities? How active is the social life? Is it predominantly a commuter school?)

## 4. Overall Impressions

(What you liked least/most, what seemed special or different here.)

## 5. Other Comments

Rating (1 - 10)

Did You  
Know?

## So How Do You Actually Apply?

### Institutional Application vs. The Common Application

Every college requires that you submit an application before they will consider you as a potential student. Many colleges create their own institutional application, specific to the information they would like to know about you. But over three hundred colleges now use The Common Application.

The [Common Application](#) is a universal application that you fill out once, copy, and then can submit to multiple colleges. Many Common Application schools also require a supplemental application to go along with the Common Application. The Supplement is where these colleges ask their own specific questions. Sometimes it can be as simple as filling out your name and address again. Other times, there can be an additional essay.

If a college provides an institutional application and also accepts the Common Application, don't worry. You do not have to fill out both. You can submit either document without any fear that the college will prefer one or the other.

### Paper Vs. Online

For many years, the only way to apply to a college was to write a letter to the admissions office to request a copy of their application. With the advent of the Internet, the process of getting applications has become much easier and quicker. Now all you have to do is log on to a college's website and its application should be readily available for download on the home page or undergraduate admissions page. You can also get The Common Application on its webpage. But one question still lingers...

Some colleges, as well as the Common App, allow you to fill out the application online and then print hard-copies to mail!

### **“Should I mail a paper application or submit my application online?”**

The quick answer is that it really doesn't matter. Colleges will always consider paper and online applications equally. But there are some things you should think about before deciding which way to go.

**Comfort level:** Many students use a computer every day of their lives and only hand-write when taking notes during class. If you are comfortable doing things online, you should have no problem submitting a college application online. But if you would rather fill out paper versions of your application, that is perfectly fine as well. Some people find comfort in turning in their application packages to the post office, knowing exactly when it has been postmarked.

**Confirmation:** If you apply online, chances are you will get immediate confirmation that your application has been received. You'll also be able to check your application status online whenever you want. With a paper application, many colleges will send you a letter or email that they have received your application, but you may have to call the school to check in.

**College's Preference:** Some colleges will tell you outright that they prefer online applications to paper applications. Some colleges do not even make a paper version available. In these cases, strongly consider submitting your application online.

**Application Fee Waiver or Discount:** Some colleges offer fee waivers or discounts if you apply online. Some others even offer discounts with special paper applications. With application fees averaging \$40 each, consider applying with whichever option will be the cheapest.

# The Application File

Did You Know?

When you submit an application to a college, they immediately open a file for you. Once it is complete, they will review it and ultimately make a decision. Make sure you are familiar with all of the pieces that go into your application file. You are responsible to submit some pieces while your guidance counselor or teachers are responsible for submitting other items.

## **You are responsible to complete and submit:**

**The Application Itself:** College applications are usually two to six pages in length, depending on the school. It will ask for basic personal information, information about your family, the high school you have attended, your potential choice of major, a list of your activities in and out of school, and your college entrance exam scores.

**The Application Supplement:** Remember, this is often a part of the process when you apply using the Common Application.

**An Essay or Personal Statement:** Most colleges require at least one essay of between 500-750 words. Many will ask you to respond to a specific question, while others will allow you to submit an essay on a topic of your choice. Some colleges will ask for multiple essays. Other colleges ask short-answer questions in addition to the full essay.

**Resume or Activity Sheet:** If you have more activities than will fit on the application itself, consider creating a student resume to go along with your application.

You can format it in any way you see fit to highlight the things you are most proud of.

**College Entrance Exam Scores:** You must submit official copies of your SAT, SAT Subject Test, and/or ACT scores directly to the colleges. You can arrange to send scores through the College Board or ACT websites. DHS will not submit your test scores for you.

**Application Fee:** Application fees usually range from \$20 to \$75 for each school, with an average of around \$40. If you send a paper application, be sure to include a check. For online applications, you must make payment with a credit card.

**Special Talent Portfolio:** If you have a special talent you might consider submitting photo slides, videos or audio tapes of your ability. Some colleges require portfolios for certain programs, while many other colleges will be happy to review them.

**Your guidance counselor is responsible for submitting (and you are responsible to request) a Transcript Packet for each college.**  
**The Transcript Packet includes:**

**Your Transcript:** Your transcript is a list of all the courses you have taken and the grades you have earned in them. It also includes your GPA and Class Rank.

**A School Report:** This report includes standard questions that many colleges ask about students.

Some schools offer no-fee application options, so be sure to research what might be available.

Make sure you follow the correct procedure for requesting college materials from your guidance counselor and teachers!!!

## Did You Know?

**Your Counselor Letter of Recommendation:** Counselors will gladly write recommendations for any student that requires one. But in order for your counselor to write a recommendation, you must submit your [Student Brag Sheet](#), [Parent Brag Sheet](#) and your resume, if you make one. This must be done as soon as possible and no later than the deadlines found on page 20 of this guide.

**A DHS Profile:** The DHS Profile contains general information about the school itself as well as demographic data from your graduating class. It helps the admissions officers put your application in perspective with other students from DHS as well as with students from other high schools.

A recommendation from a coach or club advisor is always a plus, but it does not replace either teacher recommendation.

Make sure you send your teachers a Thank You note after they write your recommendations. Teachers volunteer their time to write these letters and they deserve your appreciation.

## A Word on Teacher Recommendations

**Many colleges require recommendations from teachers to complete your application file. Here are some tips for requesting teacher recommendations:**

1. Start thinking today about which teachers you would like to ask. You should think of at least one teacher you had in a core academic subject. A second recommendation can be from any teacher you have had.
2. Ask teachers with whom you had, or still have, a good relationship. The more a teacher knows you, the better your recommendation will be.
3. Do not ask more than two teachers for recommendations.
4. Request your letters as early as possible, giving teachers at least four weeks notice at a minimum.
5. Give your teachers a completed [Teacher Recommendation Brag Sheet](#), as well as any other materials they might like.
6. Provide your teacher with a stamped and addressed envelope for each college, along with any teacher recommendation forms that might be required for specific schools.

## Essays That Worked

For many students, the hardest and most time-consuming part of the college application is the essay. There is no secret formula for writing a wonderful essay. It is impossible to try to determine what colleges are looking for in their applicants, so the best course of action is to **be yourself**. Some colleges make it easy by offering specific topics. There is no right or wrong answer, so use your creativity and talent to bring your college application to life. Write clearly and be sure to use proper grammar. Don't try to outwit admissions reps with words that do not flow comfortably. Speak in your own voice using your own vocabulary. Read it several times before submitting it because even simple blemishes will be noticed. Bad grammar, clichéd expressions and poor editing can sabotage your essay. And most importantly, never let anyone else write an essay for you. No one else can express your heart and soul. Admissions reps read thousands of essays each year. Make yours memorable!

As you begin thinking about what to write, consider the following letter from Martha Merrill, the Dean of Admissions at Connecticut College. Then visit their website to read some "[Essays That Worked](http://www.conncoll.edu/admission/essays.htm)" at [www.conncoll.edu/admission/essays.htm](http://www.conncoll.edu/admission/essays.htm).

Dear Prospective Applicant:

Writing the essay for a college application can be one of the more dreaded parts of the application process for students.

Admission officers are painfully aware of that fact, and we answer many questions about the role and purpose of the essay: "How much does it count?", "What should I write about?" and "How do I know if an experience is 'significant' or not?" are common queries. Writer's block often arises as you worry about offering a pithy snapshot of your life and academic prowess in three typewritten pages or less.

The admission staff at Connecticut College compiled the following collection of outstanding essays to help you approach your own personal statement with confidence and excitement. Through the range of responses these students took, you will see that the essay - as a sample of writing and a reflection of your interests and values - can take many forms. While there is not any "right" or "wrong" topic, some approaches offer a bit more creativity and fluency than others. The samples we have selected reflect this idea.

Each of these essayists was offered admission to Connecticut College, and each matriculated at the College. The writing samples they submitted often played an important role in obtaining the coveted "fat letter" on April 1.

Your college essay provides a wonderful opportunity to share your thoughts with the Admission Committee and to let us see another side of you. Enjoy the experience. Remember that we look forward to reading your work and getting to know you a little bit better. Good luck as you face the computer screen!

Sincerely,

Martha Merrill '84 Dean of Admission and Financial Aid

# How to Prepare Your High School Resume

A High School Resume is a great way to describe yourself more completely than your academic transcript can reveal. Your resume is very important. Be sure to fill it out completely and accurately. It should always be typed. If the resume exceeds one page, be sure to place your name and high school on all pages.

- Brainstorm a list of all of the activities you have done throughout your four years of high school.
- Write down **EVERYTHING**, no matter how small.
- Include sports and activities done at school, but don't forget activities outside of school. (i.e. church activities and groups, scouting, explorer groups, social clubs, music lessons, dance groups, etc.)
- Include community service – this shows a commitment to your community.
- Include employment – this shows that your time was spent in a productive activity that also demonstrates your ability to manage your time, illustrates your work ethic, and gives a glimpse of you in a non-academic setting. **Yes, babysitting is real employment!**
- Be sure to include any honors or awards that you have earned over the years –in and out of school.
- Give an extra description to anything that isn't known outside of Dedham.

**The format can be done many ways, but here are examples of the two most common ways:**

## Organized by Grade

### Senior Year (2009 - 2010)

Volunteer Club (Secretary)  
 Student Blood Drive  
 Dance to benefit Special Olympics  
 Dedham Rec. Department Halloween activities  
 SADD (Student Against Destructive Decisions)  
 Yearbook Staff  
 National Honor Society  
 Cross-Country Track  
 Swim Team (Co-Captain)  
 Varsity Softball (Captain, MVP)  
 Shaw's Supermarket (Cashier)

### Junior Year (2008 - 2009)

Volunteer Club  
 Student Blood Drive  
 Food Drive  
 SADD  
 Prom Committee  
 Cross-Country Track  
 Swim Team  
 Varsity Softball  
 Church Youth Group

**And so on...**

## Organized by Theme

### School Clubs:

|                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Chess Club             | Grades 9-12  |
| Volunteer Club         | Grades 10-12 |
| Student Blood Drive    | Grades 10-12 |
| Food Drive             | Grade 11     |
| Prom Committee         | Grade 11     |
| National Honor Society | Grade 12     |
| Yearbook Staff         | Grade 12     |

### Sports:

|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Junior Varsity Softball | Grades 9-10  |
| Co-Captain              | Grade 10     |
| MVP                     | Grade 10     |
| Varsity Softball        | Grades 11-12 |
| Captain                 | Grade 12     |
| MVP                     | Grade 12     |
| Swim Team               | Grades 10-12 |
| Co-Captain              | Grade 12     |
| Cross-Country Track     | Grades 11-12 |

**And so on...**

# Admissions Options

Did You Know?

## Non-Restrictive Application Plans

**Regular Decision** is the application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time. A student may apply to other institutions without restriction. **Deadlines typically begin as early as January 1<sup>st</sup> and continue into the winter and spring.**

**Rolling Admission** is the application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are completed and renders admission decisions to students throughout the admissions cycle. A student may apply to other institutions without restriction.

**Early Action (EA)** is the application process in which students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Students who are admitted under Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution's offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1. Under non-restrictive Early Action, a student may apply to other colleges. **Deadlines begin as early as November 1<sup>st</sup> and typically continue until December 15<sup>th</sup>.**

## Restrictive Application Plans

These allow institutions to limit students from applying to other early plans.

**Early Decision (ED)** is the application process in which students make a commit-

ment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. While pursuing admission under an Early Decision plan, students may apply to other institutions, but may have only one Early Decision application pending at any time. The institution must notify the applicant of the decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time after the Early Decision deadline. Usually, a nonrefundable deposit must be made well in advance of May 1. The institution will respond to an application for financial aid at or near the time of an offer of admission.

Institutions with Early Decision plans may restrict students from applying to other early plans. Institutions will clearly articulate their specific policies in their Early Decision agreement. **Deadlines begin as early as November 1<sup>st</sup> and typically continue until December 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Restrictive Early Action (REA)** is the application process in which students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Institutions with Restrictive Early Action plans place restrictions on student applications to other early plans. Institutions will clearly articulate these restrictions in their Early Action policies and agreements with students. Students who are admitted under Restrictive Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution's offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1. **Deadlines begin as early as November 1<sup>st</sup> and typically continue until December 15<sup>th</sup>.**

You are responsible for understanding the application options for each college.

# Transcript Request Procedure

Once you have identified the colleges you will apply to, you must formally request from your guidance counselor that your transcript packet be submitted to all the schools.

Creating transcript packets is an extremely time-consuming responsibility for the guidance counselors. With approximately 200 students in the graduating class, each applying to an average of six to eight colleges, your counselors need as much notice as possible to write letters of recommendation and prepare transcript packets. Once you have finalized your list of colleges, request your transcripts immediately. The earlier you submit your formal request, the sooner your transcript packet will be submitted.

**In order to guarantee the timely submission of your transcript packet, ALL parts of the transcript request process MUST be completed by the following deadlines:**

## Application Deadline   Request Deadline

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| November 1       | October 15  |
| November 15      | October 25  |
| December 1 or 15 | November 15 |
| January 1        | December 7  |
| January 15       | December 20 |
| February 1       | January 10  |

If you do not turn in all your request materials by the above dates, we cannot guarantee that they will be submitted by your application deadline. However, we will still try our best to submit your packets as soon as possible.

But remember, the application deadline is just that; the "application deadline." As long as your application is submitted or postmarked on time, it is OK if your transcript packet follows at a later date.

*To formally request your transcript packets, you must submit/complete the following six things:*

### **1. [The Transcript Request Form.](#)**

This form lists all the colleges you wish to have your transcript packet sent to. On this form, you must enter the name of each college, its application deadline, if you are applying Early Decision or Early Action, whether or not the college accepts online records, and if you are using the Common Application online. This form gives us your permission to release your school records to the colleges, employers, scholarships, etc. of your choice. It must be signed by both you and your parent or guardian. You may use multiple forms if your number of schools exceeds the spaces allotted.

### **2. List all schools as "colleges I'm thinking about" in your [Naviance Account.](#)**

### **3. [The FERPA Agreement in Naviance.](#)**

In order to submit your transcript to Common Application schools, you must complete the FERPA agreement found in Naviance. To complete this step, log in to Naviance, click the "colleges" tab and then click the link for "colleges I am applying to." You will be prompted to complete this agreement. You must also enter your Common Application username and password so that Naviance can submit your information

directly to the Common Application. **In order to complete this step, you must have an active Common Application account.**

### **4. [The Senior Brag Sheet.](#)**

This questionnaire is vital in helping your guidance counselor write your letter of recommendation. Fill it out as honestly as you can and try to write as much as possible. This is your opportunity to let us know what you think is important to highlight in your recommendation.

### **5. [The Parent Brag Sheet.](#)**

This questionnaire allows your parents to share their thoughts on your achievements over the last four years. It is also quite helpful for your counselor when crafting your letter of recommendation.

### **6. [Your Student Resume, if available.](#)**

**You do not need to give your counselor any envelopes to send transcripts, but see the next page for information on envelopes for teacher recommendations.**

## Did You Know?

### DON'T PANIC!!!

Almost every student gets at least one of these letters. As long as your application is in on time, colleges allow the remaining documents to follow later.

Do NOT put your return address on the envelope. Instead, write in the Dedham High School address.

## Are You Missing Anything?

Once you submit your application, you will likely receive a notice from the college, thanking you for your application and telling you that they are still waiting for documents such as your transcript or letters of recommendation, to make your file complete. **THIS IS A ROUTINE LETTER**, usually sent automatically, so **DON'T PANIC!** If you do receive a letter asking for missing items, check in with your counselor to find out when he or she submitted your transcript packet. Sometimes it takes

up to **THREE WEEKS** after a college receives materials in the mail before your file is updated. Feel free to call the admissions office and let them know when your materials were submitted. But if the college still claims that they don't have your materials a month after they were sent by your counselor, let us know. We'll be happy to contact the admissions office, clear anything up, and resubmit any documents that remain outstanding.

## Envelopes for Teacher Recommendations

While many colleges accept recommendations online and many teachers submit recommendations online, you still may need to provide your teachers with envelopes to mail some recommendations. When you list your schools in Naviance, you will learn if the college accepts records online. If the school does not, be sure to provide your teachers with a standard business-sized envelope, addressed to the college, with one stamp. If your recommending teacher does not submit recommendations online, you must provide envelopes for ALL your schools.

**Be nice and get self-adhesive envelopes!**

Dedham High School  
140 Whiting Avenue  
Dedham, MA 02026

US  
Postage  
44¢

Northeastern University  
Application Processing Center  
P.O. Box 120  
Randolph, MA 02368-9998

On each envelope, make sure you write the name of the college as well as "Admissions Office," "Application Processing Center," etc. as necessary.

Get the college's mailing address from its admissions webpage, the Common Application website, or Naviance as necessary.

# Application Checklist

**Print this page and keep records of all your application activities!**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Colleges listed in <a href="#">Naviance</a> ___ | FERPA Agreement on <a href="#">Naviance</a> ___ |
| <a href="#">Senior Brag Sheet</a> ___           | <a href="#">Parent Brag Sheet</a> ___           |
| Teacher 1: name _____                           | Requested Letter ___ Envelope ___ Thank You ___ |
| Teacher 2: name _____                           | Requested Letter ___ Envelope ___ Thank You ___ |

|                                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Name of College                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Application                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Supplement (if nec.)                 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Essay                                |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Student Resume                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Application Fee                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| SAT/ACT Scores                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Portfolio (if nec.)                  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <a href="#">Transcript Requested</a> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other _____                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## To Interview or Not to Interview

Did You Know?

Interviews can be the most nerve-racking part of the whole process. Some schools believe the interview is an integral part of the application process, and may require or strongly recommend an interview once you have applied. For other schools, it is not as important. These schools may offer optional interviews or not offer interviews at all. No matter what, be sure to check on each college's interview policy.

At those schools where the interview is optional, consider arranging for an interview **if you feel that seeing an admissions officer face-to-face will improve your chances**, or if you have any questions you want answered. You'll help yourself if you make a good impression.

Many interviews are conducted by an admissions representative on the college campus itself. For students that are unable to visit the campus for an interview, many schools have alumni who volunteer their time by interviewing for the college. These interviews are typically conducted at either the interviewer's home or at a neutral location like a coffee shop or the local library. After the interview, the admissions rep or alumnus will write a report detailing his or her impressions of you and how you might fit in at the school. But remember, in al-

most every case, **your grades, test scores, extracurricular activities, essay, and school recommendations will carry more weight.**

### REMEMBER: SCHEDULE INTERVIEWS WELL IN ADVANCE!

**There are two keys to a successful interview:**

1. Make yourself stand out from the crowd.
2. Don't try to be something you're not.

In other words, if you can make the interviewer remember you by highlighting things about yourself that are really worth remembering, chances are that you've had an excellent interview. The interview, like the entire admissions process, can be a productive learning experience. At its best, it can even be fun. Try to look at your interviewer as a resource who may help you to better understand the college.

A successful interview is one that you enjoy. Good interviews humanize the admissions process. Look at your college interview as an opportunity to have direct, human contact with the admissions process.

**Relax and make the most of it!**

If the interview is optional, you don't have to do one, especially if you are worried that it might go poorly.

## Do's and Don'ts for the Interview

### DO

- Be prompt • Be honest • Listen and take time to reflect • Be energetic and enthusiastic • Make eye contact • Give a firm handshake • Use the name of your interviewer • Bring a transcript and SAT or ACT scores • Dress comfortably and neatly • Review the college's catalog and website •

**ASK QUESTIONS!**

### DON'T

- Be negative • Yawn, slouch, or stretch • Chew gum, hair, or nails • Brag or recite a prepared speech • Interrupt your interviewer • Be disinterested or nonchalant • Criticize your teachers, school or friends • Bring an elaborate portfolio, resume, or display •

**LIE OR EXAGGERATE!**

## Questions You Might be Asked in an Interview

**These are samples of kinds of questions you might be asked by an interviewer. Think about how you would answer them. Even if you are not asked any of these, if you have thought about them, you will be well prepared.**

1. How do you like your high school? What has been the most positive experience you had? The most negative?
2. If I visited your high school for a few days, what would I find is your role in the school/ community? What would your teachers say were your greatest strengths as a person? As a student? Likewise what about your shortcomings or weaknesses?
3. What is the most significant contribution you've made to your high school?
4. What is the overriding consideration in your choice of a college?
5. What are some of your goals - personal and career - for the future?
6. Tell me about a particular class in which you found yourself intellectually stimulated.
7. What is your reason for participating in athletics, student government, newspaper, etc.?
8. Since you are interested in science and math, why are you interested in a liberal arts college rather than a more technical institution?
9. How and in what ways do you expect, plan, hope, to transfer your secondary school contributions, achievements, activities to the college level?
10. What has been your favorite subject in high school?
11. What might you study in college?
12. What books or articles have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking? Have you read deeply into any one author or field?
13. What events, if any, would you deem critical in your life thus far?
14. What pressures do you feel operating on you in society to conform? Describe ways in which you "go your own way."
15. How have you spent your summers?
16. What are your reactions to current events?
17. Describe some issues that you have really become indignant over in the past year.
18. How would you describe yourself as a person?
19. Have you ever thought of not going to college? What would you do?
20. How do you spend your free time?
21. Do you have any questions? **(Make sure you come prepared with your own questions!)**

Did You Know?

Most colleges require a deposit of approximately \$300 to reserve your spot for the fall.

If you applied under Early Action, regular decision or rolling admissions, you have until May 1st to decide on your college.

## The Envelope You've Been Waiting For!

After months of waiting, you've finally received a letter from the colleges to which you applied. Is it big or small? Does it feel light or heavy? No matter the shape and size of the envelope, chances are the news will be one of four things:

### You've Been Accepted!

Congratulations! You've gotten into college! If you were accepted to a college through its Early Decision option, you now know where you will be attending school next year. If you applied under any other admissions option, you can wait until May 1<sup>st</sup> to decide whether or not you will attend. But don't wait too long to reply if you don't have to. Once you choose which college to attend, send your reply and deposit immediately. Also, the sooner you reply, the better your chances of getting housing on campus if it is not already guaranteed.

### You've Been Deferred...

When students apply early to colleges, the applications and transcripts are usually sent before much of the senior year has been completed. Typically students are deferred when the colleges want to see continued achievement or improvement in grades and test scores. If you were deferred, it means you may not have been a clear admit, but it also means that you were not a clear rejection either. Have no fear. Now your application will be given a fresh review during the regular application process. You'll have the same opportunity for an acceptance as if you applied through regular admission from the start.

### You've Been Rejected (rats!)

Unfortunately this is never good news when you open the envelope. Students are rejected from colleges for a number of reasons. Most of the time, it may mean that your grades were not high enough, but other times, the applicant pool may have just been too competitive. Even valedictorians and students with perfect SAT scores get rejected from colleges. So don't feel too bad. Very few students are accepted to each and every college they apply to. Chances are that you only applied to schools you would be happy attending. Focus your attention to the schools you got into!

### You've Been Waitlisted (Now What?)

If you have been offered a spot on a college's waitlist, you have a choice to make. If you already got into another school you would rather attend, congratulations! Reply to the school you were waitlisted from and ask them to remove you from the waitlist. But if you are waitlisted from a school that you would rather attend if offered the opportunity, make sure you reply ASAP to save your spot on the waitlist. Almost every college accepts students off its waitlist each year. If you have accomplished anything noteworthy since sending your application, feel free to update the college. It may boost your chances.

# Warning: Senioritis can be Dangerous

by Mary A. Villeponteaux

**Senioritis** - (S-se-nyer-i-tis) n. Lack of concern for one's academic program and performance.

Second semester high school juniors and seniors are the individuals at risk of contracting this potentially crippling academic syndrome.

One of the major concerns of second semester juniors is scheduling courses for their senior year. While most juniors continue to pursue strong academic courses their senior year, others succumb to "senioritis." These students take English 12 and perhaps one or two other academic courses then load up on nonacademic electives. This proves to be detrimental when applying to colleges and universities.

Juniors should remember that no college or university in the country looks favorably upon a weak senior program. At least four academically challenging courses should be taken during the senior year. Advanced Placement and Honors level courses are preferred if they are available and appropriate. Performance and program in the senior year are strong predictors of the student's success as a college freshman.

Second semester seniors who have been offered admission to a college or university are the most common victims of "senioritis." These students have taken four to six academic courses with at least two courses at the Advanced Placement or Honors level. Performance their first semester remained consistently above average, usually with a B+ to A average in all subjects.

Symptoms develop shortly after the offers of admission begin arriving in the mail. Many students realize that three and a half years of hard work actually did pay off: Soon after this revelation seniors begin to achieve a level of confidence never before experienced. They feel wonderful - and they SHOULD. However, too often this euphoria results in apathy toward schoolwork. As a result, grades begin to fall and academically challenging courses are replaced with far less demanding classes. Students with chronic cases of "senioritis" often receive final grades of C's, D's and even F's in courses with first semester averages of A and B+.

The chronic sufferers of "senioritis" convince themselves that the college or university from which they received an offer of admission is not concerned with final grade reports. Students ignore the fact that their performance and course level must remain consistent throughout the entire senior year.

Offers of admission are based on the performance and curriculum illustrated the first semester. Any deviation from that alters the basis for the offer of admission. As a result, the members of the Admissions Committee doubt the true ability and motivation of the applicant. The Vice President for Admissions at Mary Washington College requires students to explain, in writing, their decline in academic performance.

**The admissions Committee reserves the right to withdraw an offer of admission if the student's performance falls below the acceptance level.**

Counselors, if you know students who have lapsed into "senioritis," please share this article with them. Remember, a dramatic decline in academic performance or a change in curriculum can result in the withdrawal of an offer of admission. Students can lose the opportunity to attend the college or university of their choice.

# DHS Junior/Senior Planner

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Look for updates on the DHS Guidance webpage, on Blackboard and on Naviance/Family Connection.

- Start thinking about the answers to the following questions:
  - a) What kind of college do I want to attend? (Liberal arts school, a pre-professional school, large university, etc.)
  - b) What size school do I want? (For example, one with 10,000 students or more or one with as few as several hundred.)
  - c) Where do I want to be? (Close to home or far away? Some people find being far away too lonely; others enjoy the freedom.)
  - d) What location do I want? (Urban or rural? In the middle of a big city or in the suburbs.)
  - e) What life-style do I want? (What do you want available on your campus?)
- Using **PSAT** results, begin to develop a range of colleges.
- Research available SAT Prep courses.
- **Register for the March SAT Reasoning Test or the May SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests.** Register on-line at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). CEEB code # for DHS is **220-675**.
- **Plan a trip to visit colleges. April vacation is a good week to see colleges that are a great distance from home.**

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- **Take the SAT** (If you take the SAT in March you have a chance to boost your scores by re-taking it in May/June.)
- **Register for the May or June SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests.** Register on-line at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). CEEB code # for DHS is **220-675**. (Students with an SSD # cannot register on-line. You must register by mail or phone. See your guidance counselor.)
- Consider taking **SAT Subject Tests** in June in courses you are taking this year. Talk to your subject teacher and your guidance counselor.
- Meet with your guidance counselor and parents to discuss your post-secondary plans and the college application process
- Start researching colleges through websites like Naviance/Family Connection - [www.connection.naviance.com/dedham](http://www.connection.naviance.com/dedham), College Board - [www.collegeboard.com/psatextra](http://www.collegeboard.com/psatextra), and the Massachusetts Career Information System - [www.masscis.intocareers.org](http://www.masscis.intocareers.org).
- Visit the DHS Guidance Website at <http://www.dedham.k12.ma.us/dhs/guidance>.
- Military Academy/ROTC application process begins now.
- **April vacation is a good week to visit colleges. Plan a trip to see colleges that are a great distance from home.**

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- Consider taking the **ACT Test**. See your counselor for additional information, or visit [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).
- **Take the SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests-** Register on-line at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). CEEB code # for DHS is **220-675**.
- **Speak to teachers from whom you may ask for recommendations!**
- **Work hard now to maintain or improve your final averages in all of your courses.**
- Remember, junior year grades are very important.

**YOUR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR**

**Get to know your counselor well. He or she will be writing a letter of recommendation for you! Talk about interests, schools, and become familiar with the college search through computer programs available on the internet.**

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- Apply for summer programs and activities. Do something interesting.
- Take the **SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests**.
- Plan on extensive summer reading in order to improve October/ November/December Critical Reading and Writing SAT scores.
- Remember your summer reading grade will be individually posted on your transcript sent to all colleges.
- Consult your guidance counselor for improvement strategies and look into SAT prep courses. Take an SAT Prep course, if necessary. Study SAT review materials.

**BE CONSTRUCTIVE OVER THE SUMMER!**

- **Begin making a preliminary list of colleges to research**
- **Start a rough draft of your application essay**
- **Get a job, or take a class, or travel, or perform community service – Do something you will enjoy and make your time worthwhile!**

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- Get off to a good start academically - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter grades are very important.
- Review list of colleges. Make sure you visit all the ones you are interested in. Get applications and information. Do they have fall visitation days? Does the school require an interview? (Generally, small private schools encourage an interview.
- Send for or download applications of colleges not in attendance at college nights.
- Study SAT review materials.
- **Register for the November SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests.** Register on-line at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). CEEB code # for DHS is **220-675**.
- Ask teachers for recommendations.
- Work on your application essay.
- View The DHS Scholarship List, posted on [Blackboard](#) in the HS Students course.
- Check list of college representatives who will be visiting DHS on [Naviance/Family Connection](#). Schedule a meeting.
- **APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS!!!**

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Look for updates on the DHS Guidance webpage, on Blackboard and on Naviance/Family Connection.

- **Take the SAT.**
- **Register for the December SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests.**
- Finalize college list. (Check college handbook to see if SAT II tests are required). Generally, guidance recommends that a student's final list include schools from **each** of the following categories:
  - ⇒ **REACH** - Schools that might be considered "long shots." This could include the student's top choices.
  - ⇒ **TARGET** - Schools at which the probability of admission is likely.
  - ⇒ **SAFETY** - Schools at which the probability of admission is highly likely.
- Attend the Fall College Fair, sponsored by The Education Cooperative. Visit <http://www.tec-coop.org/site/col-fairs.html> for more information.
- Visit colleges. Overnight visits are most helpful.
- Check list of college representatives who will be visiting DHS on [Naviance/Family Connection](#). Schedule a meeting.
- Ask teachers for recommendations.

**For November 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> deadlines, you must formally request transcripts with your guidance counselor by October 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> respectively.**

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- Watch application deadlines! **EARLY-DECISION APPLICATIONS ARE DUE THIS MONTH.**
- Work on applications. They must be easy to read; type essays and **check SPELLING!!!**
- Work on application essays.
- Review for re-take of SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests.
- **Register for the December SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests.**
- **Take the SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests.**
- Arrange to send official SAT scores to colleges through College Board.
- Keep your parents informed and involved in your college search, career planning or job search. Parents can provide valuable support, suggestions and contacts.

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- Attend Financial Aid Night at DHS.
- **Get your FAFSA Pin. Visit [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).**
- **Take the SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests.**
- Arrange to send official SAT scores to colleges through College Board.
- As you complete your applications, notify your guidance counselor so that he/she may send your school report that includes your transcript, DHS Profile, school report, and a counselor letter of support.
- **BE SURE TO FOLLOW THE CORRECT TRANSCRIPT REQUEST PROCEDURE!!!**

**For January 1<sup>st</sup> deadlines, you must formally request transcripts with your guidance counselor by December 7<sup>th</sup>.**

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Look for updates on the DHS Guidance webpage, on Blackboard and on Naviance/Family Connection.

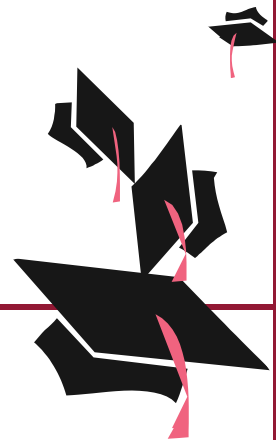
- **FAFSA applications are available on January 1st. Visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).**
- FAFSA and/or CSS Profile forms should be completed this month.
- **Continue to send college applications, and keep your counselor updated.**
- Give your guidance counselor stamped and addressed envelopes for any colleges requesting mid-year grades.
- Continue to explore colleges as thoroughly as possible.
- Talk with former graduates who are home from college. Learn, first-hand, about the colleges and universities they are attending.
- Scholarship booklets are available for seniors in guidance.
- View The DHS Scholarship List, posted on Blackboard.
- Research sources of private outside scholarships.

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- **Send any last-minute college applications, and keep your counselor updated.**
- Provide all requested information to colleges.
- Check daily for scholarships.
- Watch for scholarship deadlines.
- Check in with the guidance office; listen for announcements.
- Let your counselor know which colleges you have gotten into.

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- **Submit the Local Scholarship Application to the guidance office!!!**
- Visit colleges you have been accepted to. Stay overnight, if possible.
- **Make final decision . . . . . and send deposit by May 1<sup>st</sup>.**
- Advanced Placement Exams: First two weeks of May
- Senior Final Exams



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**GRADUATION!!!**

**GOOD LUCK AND HAVE A GREAT SUMMER.**

**YOU'VE EARNED IT!!!**

## Glossary of Common Terms

**ACCREDITATION:** Recognition by an accrediting organization or agency that a college meets certain minimum standards in programs, services, and facilities.

**ACT:** American College Testing Program - an alternative college admission test. Measure English, math, reading and science reasoning abilities. Many students take the ACT in addition to the SAT I.

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT:** Designed for students who have completed AP classes in high school and the exam in each subject area. Colleges may grant advanced standing and credit depending upon grades earned on exams.

**ADVISOR:** A member of the teaching faculty who advises students on course selection and curriculum concerns.

**APPLICATION FEE:** A non-refundable fee usually charged for making application to a particular college.

**AUDIT:** Attend a class without getting credit for it.

**BACCALAUREATE DEGREE:** The Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science or any other bachelor's degree granted by a college or university for a program that typically requires four years of full-time study.

**CALENDAR:** The system by which an institution divides its year into shorter periods for instruction. The most common calendars are semesters, quarters and 4-1-4.

**CANDIDATES REPLY DATE AGREEMENT:** This agreement established a common date, May 1st, as the earliest date a college or university may require an accepted

applicant to say whether he or she plans to attend. Early Decision applications are exempt from this agreement.

**CARNEGIE UNIT:** One Carnegie unit is given for successful completion of one year's study of one college preparatory or academic subject in high school.

**CEEB:** College Entrance Examination Board. Dedham's School code is 220-675.

**CLASS RANK:** A student's standing based on his or her academic record as compared with that of the other members of the class. In a class of 100, the highest-ranking student would be number 1; the lowest, number 100.

**CORE CURRICULUM:** A group of courses in varied areas of the arts and sciences, designated by a college as one of the requirements for a degree.

**CONSORTIUM:** A voluntary association of two or more colleges providing joint services and academic programs to students enrolled in member institutions. Students at one campus are allowed to attend courses and use the facilities at other member campuses.

**COOPERATIVE EDUCATION:** A program integrating classroom study and work experience and offering credit and salary.

**COURSE LOAD:** The number of hours taken in a given semester or quarter. A typical load is 15-18 semester hours or 15-17 quarter hours.

**CSS:** College Scholarship Service is a service of the College Board that uses a financial aid form to standardize the method of determining a student's financial need.

## Glossary continued

**DEFERRED ADMISSION:** The practice of permitting students to postpone enrollment for one year after acceptance to the college.

**EARLY ACTION:** The student applies early in the fall of senior year and receives notification usually by the end of January. This is not a binding commitment and allows the student to submit additional applications and to accept or decline the offer of admission by May 1st.

**EARLY DECISION:** This is an application procedure whereby the student applies early in the fall of the senior year (usually by November 1st) to their FIRST CHOICE college, and agrees by contract to enter that college if offered admission. If accepted, (usually by the end of December) the student MUST withdraw all other applications.

**ETS:** Educational Testing Service, a non-profit organization that oversees the various testing and financial aid programs of the CEEB.

**FEE WAIVER:** Request for reduction or elimination of application, testing or financial aid form fees, usually based upon financial need.

**GPA:** Grade Point Average.

**HONORS PROGRAM:** Any special program for very able students that offers the opportunity for educational enrichment, independent study, acceleration or some combination of these.

**INDEPENDENT STUDY:** An arrangement that allows students to complete some of their college program by studying independently instead of attending scheduled

classes and completing group assignments. Typically, students plan programs of study in consultation with a faculty advisor or committee, to whom they may report periodically and submit a final report for evaluation.

**INTERNSHIPS:** Short-term, supervised work experience, usually related to a student's major, for which the student earns academic credit. The work can be full or part-time, on or off campus, paid or unpaid.

**LIBERAL ARTS:** A broad course of instruction comprising the arts, natural sciences, languages, literature, philosophy, religion, and the classics.

**MATRICULATION:** The process whereby a student is accepted, pays the fees, and enrolls in classes - officially becoming a student at the college. This term is only applied to freshmen or to a transfer student's first enrollment.

**NEED BLIND ADMISSION:** Financial need does not impact on the admission process.

**NEEDS ANALYSIS:** The process used to evaluate an applicant's financial situation to determine how much financial aid a student would be eligible for to meet post-secondary education expenses.

**OPEN ADMISSIONS:** The college admissions policy of admitting high school graduates and other adults generally without regard to conventional academic qualifications, such as high school subject, high school grades and admissions test scores, Virtually all applications with high school diplomas or their equivalent are accepted.

## Glossary continued

**PLACEMENT TESTS:** A battery of tests designed to assess a student's aptitude and level of achievement in various academic areas so that he or she may be advised to enroll in the appropriate level classes.

**PRIVATE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY:** An educational institution of higher education that is not supported by public taxes. Private colleges may be independent or church related.

**PSAT:** Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test.

**PUBLIC COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY:** An educational institution of higher education that is supported by public taxes.

**REGISTRATION:** A process at the beginning of each semester or quarter whereby the student selects the courses he or she will enroll in, pays the appropriate fees, and sets up a class schedule for the semester or term.

**ROLLING ADMISSION:** Certain colleges or universities have a policy of admitting qualified students on a "first-come, first-served" basis. Applicants are notified of admission decisions as soon as credentials are submitted and processed.

**ROTC:** (Reserved Officers Training Corps) Programs conducted by certain colleges in cooperation with the United States Air Force, Army and Navy. Local recruiting offices of the services themselves can supply detailed information about these programs, as can participating colleges.

**SAT REASONING TEST (SAT I):** A three-hour forty-five minute standardized test which measures the critical reading, math

and writing abilities of the student.

**SAT SUBJECT TESTS (SAT II):** One-hour subject tests which measure knowledge of particular subjects and the student's ability to apply that knowledge. Not all colleges require SAT II. Students are responsible for checking individual college requirements.

**SEMINAR:** A course in which a small group of students, headed by a professional, engages in research and discussion.

**TOEFL:** Test of English as a Foreign Language, which is taken by students whose English is their second language.

**TRANSCRIPT:** The official record of a student's academic performance from the time of entrance in a given institution to the end of the latest semester.

**TUITION:** The charge for instruction. Generally designated for a year or semester for a full-time student; for part-time students it is often designated by the credit hour of a course.

**TRANSFER PROGRAM:** An education program in a two-year college that is offered primarily for students who plan to continue their studies in a four-year college or university.

**TRIMESTER:** An academic calendar period of about 15 weeks. Three trimesters make up one year. Students make normal progress by attending two of the trimesters each year and in some colleges can accelerate their programs by attending all three trimesters in one or more years.