



Getting Into College

Parent to Parent Helpful Tips

Things to Consider when Choosing a College

GPA

SAT/ ACT Scores

Major Geographic location

Size

Sports

Academic Stress Level

Greek Life



Things To Consider When Choosing a College

- **1st Year Retention Rate**
- **Graduation Rate**
- **Post Graduation Outcomes**
- **Cost**



HELPFUL RESOURCES

- Common Data Set Initiative:

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

Or simply type in common data set and the name of any college in your search engine

- NAVIANCE
- FISKE GUIDE TO COLLEGES
- THE K&W GUIDE TO COLLEGES FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES
- US NEWS & WORLD REPORT-"COLLEGE COMPASS"

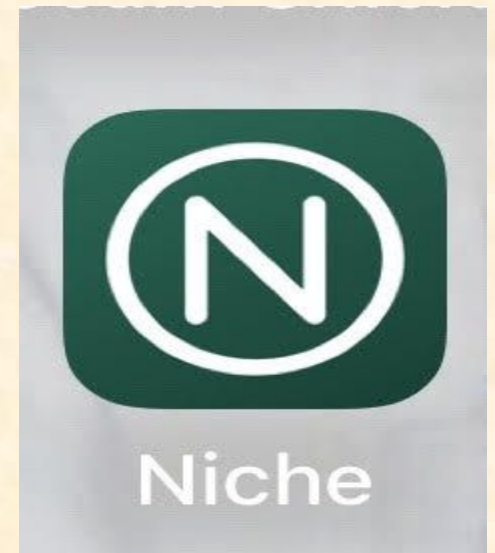


Helpful Resources

Khan Academy:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/college-career-s-more/college-admissions>

Niche app - answer prompts and get feedback on colleges for you; scholarship information



DIY College Rankings: diycollegerankings.com

Making Your List of Colleges

FAFSA -
space
for 10
but can
add
more

Just Right

Challenge

Safety

up to 10
is average

Don't make the
mistake of only
applying to 1 or 2

THINK OUT OF THE BOX

- There are over 3,000 colleges in the U.S. that offer 4 year degrees. Don't limit your search to only the colleges you have heard of.
- Start with a college list of at least 20 schools.
- If your child finds a school they like, use the resources on the previous pages to find similar institutions.



COLLEGE VISITS



- **Never too early to start!**
- **Junior year is most popular time to visit. Senior year is less desirable as some deadlines for applications are as early as Oct 1**
- **Try to visit when college is in session and stay overnight; take guided tours**
- **Check websites for virtual tours, Q&A sessions**
- **Talk with their current students- check social media**



COLLEGE VISITS

- **Take advantage of HHS days off. Columbus Day, Teacher's Convention, Spring Break. (Check their spring break schedule too)**
- **On vacation? Take a day trip to nearby colleges. Even if no tours, you may be able to walk around and get a feel for the campus or follow a self guided tour thru your phone.**
- **Believe it or not your child will know pretty quickly if a college feels right or wrong.**

The ACT

- ACT is an achievement test measuring what you have learned in school. It has 5 components: English, math, reading, science and an optional writing test.
- Go to [ACT.ORG](https://act.org) for test prep info
- Total points: 36
- Average NJ score is 23.9 /U.S. 21
- Holmdel average score is 27 (2021-2023)

The New DIGITAL SAT

- *1600 Max Score
- *Critical Reading: 200 – 800; Math: 200 – 800
- *About 2 hours instead of 3 hours
- *Shorter reading passages
- *Built in calculator to use for entire math section
- *go to [COLLEGEBOARD.ORG](https://collegelboard.org) for practice tests
- *Average U.S. SAT score is 1060/ NJ 1056
- *Holmdel average score is 1262 (2021-2023)

The New SAT

- No penalty for wrong answers, so students won't have to worry about losing points for guessing incorrectly. (Just like on the ACT.)
- There will be only 4 answer choices instead of 5. (Like on the ACT.)
- Students may be more familiar with the vocabulary tested, but they will need to know multiple definitions of those words.
- Questions will require multiple steps to get an answer.
- The reading passages will include complex structure and vocabulary.
- Foundational math skills will be more important.
- Reasoning and critical thinking skills will be paramount.
- No essay (since 2021)
- Going to change to computerized test taking in 2024.

SAT / ACT Prep Courses

- SAT and ACT Prep companies charge around \$1,000 per class or \$100 to \$200 per hour for individual tutoring. Students spend approximately \$2.5 billion a year on test preparation and tutoring. Virtual classes can currently be found for \$20 per class.
- Most do not teach **content** they teach **strategy**.
- Many guarantee they can raise your score by 100 to 200 points, or you get your money back.
- Many students raise their scores, some do not.
- College board, the non-profit company that oversees the SAT test recommends using the free and inexpensive material they offer on line.
- Khan Academy excellent SAT & ACT free online prep.

When Is a good Time To Take Exams?

- Most students take them **junior** year. Some take them **sophomore** or fall of **senior** year.
- Be aware of your child's academic and extracurricular responsibilities and find a time that is best for proper test preparation.
- **If you don't take the exams until senior year,** be aware that some schools have early decision and early action dates of **Oct 1** and regular decision as early as **Nov and Dec.**

More On Testing

- **Superscoring:** Some colleges allow you to accept the highest sub-scores from different test dates.
- Most students take the same exam two to three times
- Remember it is just a score on “A” test. There are so many other ways to define your child.

Test Optional Schools

- Many colleges do not use test scores for many reasons such as limiting of applicant pools, giving unfair advantage to students who can afford test prep courses, and the tests don't measure the type of skills they require ie....technical and musical
- More than 80% of schools are now test optional
- Some are test-optional only for students who meet certain GPA or class rank requirements.
- Fairtest.org keeps updated list of test-optional schools.

Teacher Letters of Recommendation

- Many schools ask for at least one letter of recommendation; many want two. The guidance counselor prepares a letter too and uploads letters into Naviance. Student does not see them.
- Ask for **two** as early as possible....the end of junior year if you can. Some teachers set a limit - they get very busy with these requests especially core academic teachers.
- Many teachers will ask your student what they enjoyed most about their class and their favorite assignments, even school activities and accomplishments, so be prepared with that information.

What Is Early Action?

- Apply to a college by a special **Early Action** deadline instead of regular deadline.
- Increases your chance of getting in and you usually hear a response by winter break.
- Shows you are very interested in the school
- It is a **non-binding** contract and students can apply to other colleges Early and Regular Action and wait until the spring deadline to reply.
- This is DIFFERENT from Early DECISION:

What is Early Decision?

Apply to a college by a special Early Decision deadline.

A **binding** contract. Student must commit if accepted and withdraw all other applications or else forfeit a sizeable enrollment deposit. Often have to commit before knowing what financial package will look like. Be sure your student **definitely 100%** wants to attend this college.



Rolling Admission



- Apply throughout the year and receive a response back in a timely manner. Usually starts in early fall and can continue into the early summer. Don't wait too long b/c there are deadlines for scholarships, housing etc...

Rutgers and Penn State both have rolling admission.



Financial Aid



The FAFSA links to the IRS to import your financial data so that you do not have to type it all in.

2023–24 FAFSA® Form

Use the 2023–24 FAFSA® form to apply for college financial aid for 7/1/23–6/30/24.

2024–25 FAFSA® Form Coming in December

Apply for aid for 7/1/24–6/30/25 on the 2024–25 form in December.

[Start 2023–24 Form](#)

Returning to the 2023–24 FAFSA® form?

[Correct info](#) | [Add a school](#)

[View your *Student Aid Report* \(SAR\)](#)

[Log In](#)



CSS/Financial Aid Profile

- Administered by the College Board
- Application for college-based financial aid and some private scholarship programs
- Profileonline.collegeboard.com
- \$25 application fee for first college + \$16 for each additional college or program
 - Limited number of fee waivers available awarded automatically based on the information you submit
- Questions on Profile may vary
- May complete as early as October 1 of every year
 - Deadlines will vary

Financial Aid

National Merit Scholarship/ SAT or ACT based

- <https://www.fastweb.com/>
- Use financial aid officers they are HAPPY to help!

HHS Senior Packet

You will find this on the *Guidance Department website*. Start this end of your junior year. Some guidance counselors will not meet with students to process or discuss college applications *until it is finished*. Includes a resume, parent brag sheet, letter of recommendation request forms.... Etc. Do yourself a big favor and have this **completed by September**.

Thank Goodness For the Common Application!

- Over 900 colleges and universities on one application - HOWEVER -
- some have their own supplement and can request additional items like essays, letters of recommendation etc.
- Get started on this early, it is time consuming!
Comes out late August.

Coalition for Access and Affordability

- <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/members.html>
- A coalition of diverse public and private colleges and universities (including Ivy Leagues) participate in a college admission application process for all students to help make college more accessible. The Coalition provides a “set of free online college planning tools.” It was set up in 2015.
- 150 Schools are currently members;
- Virtual Locker students can start storing information in Freshman year
- The member schools “graduate students with low-to-no debt.”

Work And Extracurricular Activities

- STARTING FRESHMAN YEAR-Keep a log or grid of your child's athletic, club, volunteer and work experience. Colleges are interested in how many hours a week, month or year your child engages in these activities.
- Work experience, musical lessons, skiing, all of these things are important and should be listed on the application.
- **Create an email address to only use for this process!**

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

HHS CHAPTER

The logo is a circular emblem with a blue and white color scheme. It features a central figure that appears to be a classical statue or a person in a dynamic pose, surrounded by a laurel wreath. The text "NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY" is arched over the top, and "HHS CHAPTER" is at the bottom.

- <https://sites.google.com/a/holmdelschools.org/nhs/>
- Requirements can change. For 2023-2024:
 - Scholarship: 3.75 or higher
 - Character
 - Leadership
 - Service: 50 hours (school and non-school based ok)
(check with advisor on specifics of what's acceptable)
- Ms. Fox is the current advisor

The College Grid

College	Common Ap?	Essay	Letters of Recc?	Early Action	Reg Decision

- Making a grid of all colleges you are applying to, with application deadlines, will keep you and your child organized.
- add more columns depending on your own criteria

The Long Essay

- multiple topics to choose from on Common Application and you can preview them the summer before senior year on the guidance website. Revised every other year
- Max word limit use it up!
- Certain colleges will ask for an additional essay on the Common Application.
- Get started on these as early as possible, especially if your child is busy in the Fall.
- English teachers will be working on and revising these in class, **fall of senior year.**
- There are companies that will help with essays

Congratulations Your Thick Envelope or Welcome E-mail Has Arrived!



- Rolling Admissions you find out pretty quickly after you apply.
- Early Admission/Decision: Most in December
- Regular Decision: March 1st majority are sent out.

WAIT LIST?

- Many students will be placed on a wait list.
- Some students will eventually be offered a slot. Some offer admission for the following semester or at a satellite campus.
- Make sure you have a back up plan....you enroll in a school your child **has been accepted to** and sign up for orientations housing etc. You can get your deposit back for many of these items.
- Email a continued interest letter if you are waitlisted.....

Orientations

- Leave your senior spring and summer open for orientation programs that can be up to a week long. June through August
- Accepted student days
- Overnights for student and parent orientation

Sit Back And Relax/ Dorm Shopping Is Right Around The Corner!!!!



- long-distance? Shop online and have items ready to pick up locally
- check with school about delivery
- go a day early and shop in local stores
- shop at home and pack your car up for the road trip
- check school website and parent FB pages for furniture measurements and room set ups



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