

I. LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL: YOUR OPTIONS

Very few high school students are certain about what job or career they would like to enter. Even for those students who believe they have settled on a career field, in our information economy, the norm will be to experience several jobs or careers over a lifetime of work. In such a climate of change it is more clear than ever that going to college or gaining specialized training after high school will dramatically increase one's chances of living a financially comfortable life as an adult.

You have lots of choices.

TYPES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Colleges:

- Colleges offer four-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees. Some also offer a two-year Associate of Arts (AA) degree and Associate of Science (AS).
- Colleges can be specialized or they can offer a broad curriculum.
- Professors see teaching as their primary responsibility and classes tend to be smaller than those in universities.

Universities:

- Universities can offer the two-year and four-year degrees, as well as graduate degrees in advanced studies beyond four years.
- Universities can be larger than colleges and usually include a liberal arts college, some professional colleges, and graduate programs.
- Universities offer a huge course selection and may have extensive resources. Class size varies, depending on the size of the university, the subject area, and the course level.
- University professors are usually involved in both teaching and research. Graduate students, rather than professors, teach some of the classes.

Community/Junior Colleges:

- Community or junior colleges offer two-year liberal arts programs or specific career training programs.
- After completing their studies, students receive a certificate or an Associate degree. Many students then transfer to a four-year college or university to continue their education.

Colleges of Technology:

- These institutions are for students who know what they want to do and have chosen certain specialized occupations. Many colleges of technology also function like a community college and offer general courses that students can use for transfer.
- Programs of study at colleges of technology prepare students for specific careers and may last weeks, months, or years, depending on career requirements.
- Students usually receive a license, a certificate, or an associate degree.

Tribal Colleges:

- Tribal colleges are small colleges that offer certificate programs and two-year Associate degrees—a few offer four-year degrees.
- Tribal colleges mostly serve American Indian students, especially those living on reservations but they welcome all students.
- There are 33 tribal colleges in the nation. Seven of them are located in Montana.

U.S. Military Academies:

- Military Academies are highly competitive four-year schools that offer superior programs in science and engineering.
- To qualify for a Military Academy, students must be a U.S. citizen, 17-22 years of age, single, and in good health. Students must be a high school graduate, nominated by a member of congress.
- Upon graduation, students receive officer rank and are required to serve in the armed forces for a specified period.
- The U.S. Military Academies are the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, the Coast Guard Academy at New London CT, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis.

Ivy League Schools:

- The Ivy League is a group of scholastically prestigious East coast schools.
- To qualify for admission to an Ivy League school, students are usually in the upper 10-20% of their high school class, participate in a variety of extracurricular activities, and have an SAT score of 600-800 on each section.
- The Ivy League schools are Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Harvard University, Princeton University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Yale University.

OPTIONS OTHER THAN COLLEGE

Military Service:

- The military offers qualified high school graduates a good salary and free job training. It provides a disciplined structure as well as opportunities for career advancement.
- The four major branches of the military are Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines. Other opportunities include the Coast Guard, the National Guard, the Reserves, and college ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps).
- The length of commitment to the military depends on whether a person enlisted after high school or completed a process to become an officer. At minimum, an individual will complete nine weeks of basic training before beginning service.
- Individuals get paid for service and usually earn funding for college after their term of service.

Apprenticeship:

- Apprenticeship is an organized system through which an individual learns the practical skills of a trade. The learning process is supervised by a craftsman who teaches you the skills on the job. For more information visit <http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/apprenticeships/atpworkers.asp>.
- Depending on the craft or trade, training can last from one to four years. While learning a craft, individuals must take classes on subjects related to the trade, usually provided by the employer, a college of technology or through correspondence courses.
- The apprentice earns while he/she learns.
- Examples of apprenticeships include automotive, utilities and energy, plumbing, and construction, among others.

Full-time Work:

- Full-time work for high school graduates varies, but most jobs are available in the service industry (retail, food industry, etc.)
- Most jobs available for high school graduates do not require formal, structured training.
- The full-time worker usually earns money on an hourly basis.

Gap Year

COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES IN MONTANA

Montana University System Institutions

MSU Bozeman
MSU Billings
Montana Tech of the University of Montana, Butte
University of Montana, Missoula
MSU Northern, Havre
University of Montana Western, Dillon

Community Colleges

Dawson Community College, Glendive
Flathead Valley Community College, Kalispell
Miles Community College, Miles City

Colleges of Technology

MSU Billings College of Technology
MSU Great Falls College of Technology, Great Falls and Bozeman
Montana Tech College of Technology, Butte
University of Montana College of Technology, Missoula
University of Montana Helena College of Technology

Private Colleges

Carroll College, Helena
Rocky Mountain College, Billings
University of Great Falls

Tribal Colleges

Blackfeet Community College, Browning
Dull Knife Memorial College, Lame Deer
Ft. Belknap College, Harlem
Ft. Peck Community College, Poplar
Little Big Horn College, Crow Agency
Salish Kootenai College, Pablo
Stone Child College, Box Elder

WHERE TO START: NAVIANCE

Naviance is your greatest resource for finding a school that has what you are looking for. Your Naviance web address is:

connection.naviance.com/bozeman

What exactly is Naviance?

Naviance is a software program used by Bozeman High School and thousands of high schools across the country that offers a wide range of college search tools, career assessments, and college admission data. Bozeman High has been using Naviance since 2011 to assist students in their college search and career planning process.

With a database of over 4000 post-secondary educational institutions and opportunities, Naviance can truly help everyone find something that meets their needs for life after high school.

Naviance can show current students the average GPA and average test scores of accepted students from Bozeman High School at all the colleges and universities they are attending. In addition, students can view detailed information about a college or university, including the number of BHS alumni who have applied, been accepted, and attended that school. Why is this important? Because students are evaluated for college admission based on the context of their high school and the college success of its graduates.

Naviance can also help you . . .

Organize applications. Once senior year begins, you will find that Naviance becomes a personal filing system. Using the features in the Colleges tab, you can create a resume, organize applications and track deadlines, as well as be able to request transcripts electronically and track your transcript submissions.

Research schools. You can perform college searches based on the criteria most important to you like location, size, majors offered, athletics, and more. You can also compare your GPA, standardized test scores, and other statistics to BHS students who have been admitted to schools you are interested in.

Find colleges that are similar. Students often find schools that are a good fit academically, but want to see more schools just like it. Naviance allows you to compare up to 10 schools that are similar, giving you information on how those schools are alike and different from the school(s) you are interested in.

Search for scholarships. In the Colleges tab are several scholarship search programs that allow you to search for national scholarships as well as view the local scholarships that are posted for Bozeman High School.

Find information about career options. Using the Career Interest Profiler in the Careers tab, you can match your interests to specific careers; and by clicking on "explore careers," you can get information on the kind of education you need to do that career. Also in the Careers tab you can take a personality assessment that will give you some direction in what kind of career possibilities you might enjoy most.

COLLEGE AND CAREER HELP YOU CAN FIND IN NAVIANCE

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	HOW TO ACCESS IT
RESUME	<p>Record your high school activities, awards, volunteer experiences, etc.</p> <p>Arrange your information into multiple printable versions of your resume</p>	<p>1. Click About Me tab</p> <p>2. Click Resume link</p>
EXPLORE INTERESTS	<p>A survey about your interest in types of work activities. Use the results to explore related occupations, see what kind of education, skills, training you need and where to get them.</p>	<p>1. Click Careers tab</p> <p>2. Click Career Interest Profiler link</p>
DO WHAT YOU ARE	<p>A personality questionnaire that helps you identify your strengths and your preferences and suggests college majors and careers based on that information</p>	<p>1. Click About Me tab</p> <p>2. Click Personality Type link</p>
COLLEGE SEARCH	<p>Set the criteria that are important to you in a college and get a list of schools that match your criteria .</p> <p>Click on the various tabs of the college profile (admissions, financial aid, majors, etc.) to get more information.</p> <p>Add colleges you're interested in to "Colleges I'm Interested In" list for future reference.</p>	<p>1. Click on Colleges tab</p> <p>2. Click College Search and/or Supermatch links</p>
COLLEGE MAPS	<p>Groups of types of colleges by location or commonality, e.g. Ivy League, Common App Colleges, Outdoor Colleges, SAT Optional Colleges, 100 Hidden Gems Colleges, etc.</p>	<p>1. Click on Colleges tab</p> <p>2. Click on College Maps link</p>

SCHOLARSHIPS	National and local organization-sponsored scholarship opportunities updated as they become available.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Click on Colleges tab 2. Click on Scholarship List link
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COLLEGE STATISTICS IN NAVIANCE

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	HOW TO ACCESS IT
APPLICATION HISTORY	Summary of Bozeman High School application results for specific colleges: admitted, denied, enrolled.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Click on Colleges tab 2. Click College Lookup under the College Research section 3. After looking up & selecting a college, the Application History table appears in the middle of the page.
SCHOOL STATISTICS	<p>Historical summary of numbers of BHS students admitted & denied by application decision plan: regular, early action, early decision etc. by college</p> <p>Historical average GPA and ACT/SAT scores for admitted applicants by college</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Click on Colleges tab 2. Click College Lookup under the College Research section 3. Look up & select school. Click on School Stats link beneath the college contact info.

COLLEGE COMPARE	Compare your GPA and test scores to the average GPA and test scores of BHS admitted students for colleges you are considering. Averages are shown in green when your are higher and in red when yours are lower than those of past admitted students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Click on Colleges tab 2. Click "Colleges I'm Thinking About" link 3. Click Compare Me above the table
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PLEASE NOTE:

1. You **DO NOT APPLY** to schools in Naviance. **You do your research** about schools you are interested in using Naviance, but you do not apply in Naviance.
2. You **APPLY** to schools directly from the college website or through the Common Application.
3. Once you have applied to schools, you request transcripts and letters of recommendation from teachers through Naviance.

II. CHOOSING A COLLEGE

Choosing a college is one of the most important decisions you will make, but it is also not true that there is only ONE right or best school for you. There are over 3000 colleges and universities in the country, and while finding a school that is a good match for you may seem to be a daunting task, there are lots of resources to help you make your decision.

CRITERIA TO CONSIDER IN COLLEGE SELECTION:

Your priorities for college selection will likely be different from your friends' priorities, but there are some things that all students should consider.

Curriculum: What do you want to study? Do you have a specific subject in mind, like veterinary medicine, or music, or automotive technology--or do you want a more general education? Do you want a range of potential majors and study programs or are you looking for a focused, specialized program you can complete in a shorter time? Are you interested in a career that requires professional certification, and does the school provide the necessary training? Do you want to take advantage of special programs like study abroad and internships?

Location: What part of the country would you like to live in? Do you want an urban or small-town setting? Do you want to stay close to home so you can visit frequently?

Size: How large or small a school do you want? Do you prefer large lectures with hundreds of students or small classes with lots of student participation? Do you want to be on a big campus with many majors, an impressive library, and lots to do? Or would you prefer a small college where you know everyone else's name? (MSU is considered to be a "medium-sized" school.)

Admission Requirements: What high school classes does the school require you to have taken to be admitted? What does the school look for in prospective students? How competitive are the admission requirements? What percentage of applicants are accepted? What are the average test scores and GPA's of the students who are accepted? What are your chances of being accepted?

Cost: How much can you afford? What kinds of financial aid does the school offer?

Quality of Education: How much contact do you want with your professors? How much does it matter to you whether professors or graduate students teach your courses?

Housing and Resources: If you plan to live on campus, what is the quality of dorm life? What options do you have for on-campus living? Is it an option to live off-campus? What kind of meal plans can the school provide and can the school provide for special diet needs?

Campus Life: How is life outside the classroom? What special interest groups, activities, fraternities/sororities do you want to be involved in? Can you "see yourself there" when you visit the school?

WESTERN UNDERGRADUATE EXCHANGE (WUE)

WUE is the Western Undergraduate Exchange, which allows students in western states to enroll in many two and four-year college programs at a reduced tuition level: 150% of the institution's regular resident tuition.

Most undergraduate fields are available to WUE students at the participating colleges and universities. Some schools have opened their entire curriculum on a space-available or first-come, first-served basis; others offer only designated programs. For more info visit <http://wue.wiche.edu>.

To be eligible for WUE, students must be a resident of one of the participating states. Some colleges and universities also have additional criteria such as ACT/SAT test scores or high school GPA.

The following states participate in WUE:

Alaska	Idaho	Oregon
Arizona	Montana	South Dakota
California	Nevada	Utah
Colorado	New Mexico	Washington
Hawaii	North Dakota	Wyoming

Information about eligibility requirements and specific programs in WUE can be obtained from the admissions office of the participating institution.

INTERNET COLLEGE SEARCHES

The internet is an invaluable time-saver to begin your college search. There are many websites with college search engines to help you find schools that match your criteria. Essentially, they all follow a similar format, which is to ask you to identify the criteria you are looking for in a school after which you get a list of those schools that meet your criteria. Then you can research the schools on your list in more detail by going to their homepage, which is linked to your search results. Please also visit the College and Career Center to access their expertise!

Some college search sites which have been found to be helpful and user-friendly:

Cappex—<http://www.cappex.com>
 Zinch—<http://www.zinch.com>
 College Prowler—<http://www.collegeprowler.com>
 SuperCollege—<http://www.supercollege.com>
 Petersons—<http://www.petersons.com>
 College Net—<http://www.collegenet.com>
 College View—<http://www.collegeview.com>
 Montana Career Information System (MCIS)—<http://www.smartaboutcollege.org>
 Go College.com—<http://www.gocollege.com>
 The College Board—<http://www.collegeboard.com>
 U.S. Two Year Colleges—<http://cset.sp.utoledo.edu/twoyrcol.html>
 Colleges.com—<http://www.colleges.com>
 College Data.com—<http://www.collegedata.com>

FINDING A MATCH

According to the Princeton Review, **matchmaking** is finding a college or program that has the educational and social environment you are looking for, where you are well-suited academically and in return, where you can contribute something that the college needs. You have more control over where you go to college than you might think. The secret is taking the time to find a school that is a good **match** for you. If you look for a college or program that is a good match, you will have more success than if you randomly apply only to places you have heard of or that students at Bozeman High School usually attend.

How many schools should you apply to? The answer to that question depends on your personal situation. The College Board suggests that your list could include between 5-8 colleges:

- 1-2 REACHES:** colleges whose admission is challenging. You have less than a 50% chance of getting accepted.
- 2-3 MATCHES:** colleges that fit you academically and socially. These are your favorites because you match them and they match what you are looking for. You have a 75% chance of being admitted.
- 2-3 SAFETIES:** colleges that you feel you have a 90-100% chance of getting into.

According to college admissions officers, it is not necessarily a good idea to apply to more than 6-8 colleges because quality applications take a lot of time and effort and must be done carefully. The amount of effort invested in completing an application is reflected in the application. Admissions officers can spot “assembly line” applications and tend to minimize their acceptance value. ***Quality is definitely better than quantity.***

MYTHS ABOUT COLLEGE SELECTION

Myth #1: There is a perfect college for me.

Before you start to choose a college, should know that any number of colleges can be right for you. There are, after all, over 3000 colleges and universities to choose from and they range from public to private, large to small, rural to urban, and liberal arts to technical. While it is true that there is undoubtedly a *type* of college which is more suited to your needs than another type, it is wise not to narrow your sights to only one or two colleges. A better plan is to investigate several possible options, to discover the advantages of each.

Myth #2: I need to decide on my career before I can choose a college.

It is not surprising that you may think you should make a career decision before you graduate from high school. While it is certainly important to have goals for yourself and to be aware of your major interests, you limit yourself drastically if you try to choose a specific career too early. 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 lifetimes. While there may still be a shortage in a career area when you enter college, the same occupation may be glutted by the time you graduate. In fact, entire occupations have come and gone in less than a decade.

Myth #3: I can only afford a low-priced college.

Students often rule out some colleges because the total cost of tuition, and room and board appears to be more than the family can afford. This is often not the case when all sources of financial aid are explored. Private colleges in particular offer significant amounts of financial aid in order to attract students from all income levels.

Myth #4: If I have never heard of a college, it can't be any good.

The average person can probably only name a small portion of the thousands of colleges and universities in the United States. It is important to remember that a college that may be right for you may be one which is now unknown to you—and some of the schools you have heard of the most may not be a match at all for you. You will be happier in your college experience if you choose a school based on your own criteria rather than on name-recognition.

III. GETTING ADMITTED TO COLLEGE

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

Admissions policies vary so you must check with each college you are interested in to make sure you meet all specific requirements for admission. However, most include:

- =Entrance test (SAT/ACT)
- =High School transcript
- =Grade Point Average/Rank in Class
- =Completion of specific college preparatory courses (may be required)
- =Letters of recommendation (may be required)
- =Personal interview (may be required)
- =Samples of previous work, e.g. portfolios or tapes, writing samples etc. (may be required)
- =Personal statement or essay (may be required)

TYPES OF ADMISSION

Regular Admission. Application and supporting documents must be submitted by a set date in the senior year. The dates vary from November 30 through March 15. The college then takes action on the application and notifies all students of its decision at the same time.

Early Decision. Some colleges offer early decision. Early decision application is made to **only one school** and is **binding**. If accepted, other applications must be withdrawn. The only exception to this rule is if the amount of financial aid offered the student varies significantly from the student's need, in which case the student may decline the early decision acceptance. The student applies early in the senior year, possibly as soon as in October, and hears early about acceptance, usually in December. The early start to this process means that *the student must be prepared to submit test scores from the junior year and must be very organized about the application process early in the senior year*. A student applying for early decision should be a strong candidate for that college.

Early Action. Early action programs, in contrast to early decision, are **not binding**. One may sometimes apply to more than one school for early action. As with early decision, early action deadline dates can be as soon as November 1 of the senior year with reply dates in December. If admitted, the student typically has until May 1 to notify the college of his or her intention to attend. Many of the Ivy League schools use this system. Check with the individual school for their policy. Again, as with early decision, a student applying early action to a school should be a strong candidate for the school.

Rolling Admission. The many state universities and some private schools that use this program act on the student's application as soon as the file is complete and notify the student of the admissions decision within weeks of receiving the complete application. Schools with a rolling admissions system continue to accept students until they reach capacity enrollment.

Open Admissions. Some colleges do not practice selective admissions and offer admission to all students who apply.

Competitive Admissions. Even though a student may meet the specific admissions requirements, he/she cannot be sure of admission to a competitive college because more students qualify than can be admitted. Each applicant will be competing with other equally qualified applicants. The more competitive the college, the more likely it is to consider personal qualifications such as special skills and abilities, leadership capabilities, community involvement, and the personal essay. The essay can be the deciding factor in an acceptance, and its importance should not be underestimated. It is the

only place the admissions officer can find out what sets this student apart from all the other equally qualified applicants.

WHEN TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION

The process of identifying colleges for possible application should begin during your junior year in high school, although it is never too early to start gathering information about colleges or universities you may want to attend.

Actual applications should be submitted by Halloween of your senior year. Most institutions recommend that you file your application as early as possible for admission in September of the following year.

Plan to take any required admissions test (ACT/SAT) prior to the end of the first semester of your senior year.

Familiarize yourself with the application deadlines for each institution so that test scores and transcripts can be requested and sent before stated deadlines.

Contact anyone you are asking to write a letter of recommendation well in advance to make sure that the recommendations will be submitted before the stated deadlines.

File your admission application early, especially if you know that the major of your choice has limited openings.

FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION

Before you start filling out college applications, you should have visited the campuses of as many as possible of the colleges you're considering and narrowed your list of schools to which you are going to apply to 4-7. The cost to apply to each college averages around \$40 each, so narrowing the number of colleges to those you are really interested in attending is cost-effective and saves a lot of unneeded work!

1. Obtain application forms. You can request application forms directly from schools in writing and through e-mail. More and more 4-year, community, and technical schools highly encourage students to apply online, even sometimes offering reduced application fees. Typically no preference is given to online applications versus paper, however, applying online ensures that colleges receive applications on the same day they are sent, and applying online will likely speed up processing.

Many selective schools accept the Common Application. Using the Common Application can save you the trouble of filling out an application for each school to which you apply. The Common Application is available online at www.commonapp.org. The form and website list schools that accept the Common Application.

2. Application components. Each community college, technical school, and 4-year school requires applicants to submit different components or documentation. Research the documents that are required by checking the specific college website or the application itself. Following is a list of items that may be required in the application process:

- è Application form
- è Supplemental application (may include letters of recommendation, essays or personal statements and/or a resume of activities and achievements)
- è College admission test scores
- è High school transcript. Read directions carefully on how and when to submit transcripts.

Note the difference between an “official” and an “unofficial” transcript.” You must fill out a “Request for a Transcript” form in [Naviance](#) for your official transcript to be sent. Allow 2-3 days to process your transcript request.

è Separate applications may be required for honors or special programs.

3. Read the directions. Read each application and accompanying instructions **thoroughly** before you begin writing. Some applications are designed to check how well the applicant can follow directions.

4. Make a practice copy. Make a copy of each application before starting to fill it out. Working from your practice copy, **type or neatly print** all information. (Colleges prefer typed applications.) Schools form first impressions of you from your application. Be neat, follow instructions, and pay attention to detail.

5. Supplemental forms. Many applications include a Secondary School Report Form to be completed by your counselor, and teacher and counselor recommendation forms. Be sure that your name and due dates are with each form, and that **you have filled out your part of the form before you give it to the person to be completed.** Include a **stamped, addressed envelope** if the forms are to be sent directly to the school.

Give teachers and counselors at least **three weeks** lead-time to complete letters and forms. They are asked to do many letters of recommendation and many Secondary School Reports, so you don’t want them to be rushed when they are doing yours. Also, it may reflect in your recommendation if you are a “last-minute” person.

6. Application fee. Include with your application a check or money order for the amount of the application fee, made payable to the college you are submitting the application to. Online applicants will be asked for credit card information.

SOCIAL NETWORKING AND COLLEGE ADMISSION

Students share personal experiences and establish far-reaching social networks online. These sites help you keep in touch with friends and allow you to meet new people. Many students spend hours each day updating their profiles, messaging their friends and clicking through photo albums. It’s harmless fun, right? But how would you feel if teachers you want to write letters of recommendation for you, or your counselor who needs to recommend you, saw your site? **Or the Admission Officer who will be evaluating your college application?**

Many students don’t think what they do in their free time has anything to do with school, so it shouldn’t matter what information they have online. They may be right: you can be a great student, regardless of what you do outside of school. But when the embarrassing details of your social life are online for anyone to look up, you might want to reconsider what you post.

It may not seem “right” or “fair” but you need to know that adults—from your high school, colleges you apply to, your family, and even law enforcement—might be looking at your pages and could be influenced by what they see.

Please use your good judgment.

YOUR “DO” LIST

- Keep all your information up to date especially about where you are applying and what type of application decision you are using so the Guidance Office knows your deadlines and can get your documents sent on time.
- Everything that you need sent including school reports, counselor recommendations, teacher recommendations, transcripts—electronic or paper—must be requested at least **3 weeks (15**

school days) ahead of your deadline or we cannot guarantee being able to meet your deadline.

- Pay for all transcripts requested in a timely manner so they are not delayed in being sent to the schools you are applying to.
- Check Naviance often for important e-mails and information about your application status, upcoming college rep visits, and events that are important for seniors.

YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECK-LIST

Use Naviance Family Connection to research colleges and access your college applications. Use this checklist to make sure you have done everything you need to do.

Complete your Senior Bio and your Teacher Recommendation Info. These are required before any forms are completed or any recommendations written.

If you are applying to at least 2 Common App schools, create your Common App account www.commonapp.org and use the Common App process for your applications.

When the Common App asks you to “invite” your counselor and teacher for their recommendations, make sure you have the correct spelling of their names in their email or they will not receive the Common App recommendation forms to fill out. Your application will be incomplete and your admission jeopardized.

All BHS staff members have the same email: firstname.lastname@bsd7.org

List colleges you are planning to apply to in “Colleges I’m Applying to” and indicate if you are applying regular decision or early action/decision to each school.

Determine if the college(s) accepts electronic or mail-only applications and school reports

If you are applying using Common App, answer “Yes” to “Applying via Common App?”

Mail-only schools: Give your counselor and/or teachers all forms that they need to fill out and fill out the transcript request form in Naviance. Provide stamped, addressed envelopes for every school.

Ask teachers in person if they will write a recommendation for you. **This must be done at least 3 weeks before you need the recommendation.**

Request teacher recommendations in Naviance. **You must do this.** It’s not enough just to ask the teacher. Your request must be in Naviance or your recommendation cannot be sent electronically.

In Naviance, request transcripts to be sent to colleges.

Request testing company send your ACT or SAT scores to colleges.

www.act.org or www.collegeboard.org

Fill in “College That I Am Attending” in Naviance when you make your final decision about where you are going.

MILITARY ACADEMIES & HIGHLY SELECTIVE COLLEGES

Military Academies and selective colleges have very high expectations. Plan accordingly.

- = Register for and take the PSAT in October of your junior year.
- = Contact the Academy you are interested in and obtain a Pre-Candidate Packet. Complete it.
- = Contact your Congressmen's office about applying for an appointment to the Academy you are interested in.
- = Register for the spring ACT and SAT Reasoning Test. Make sure to direct your scores to the colleges you are considering. Athletes, remember if you are maintaining college athletic eligibility, have your score reports sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse as well as to the college to which you are applying.
- = You will probably need two-three letters of recommendation by the end of October of your senior year. Two of these should be from school personnel, specifically teachers of academic courses you take your junior and senior year. One should be from a community member (employer, friend of the family, minister, coach, etc.). Give these people plenty of advance notice as you want them to have adequate time to write an outstanding recommendation for you.
- = Be sure to double-check the number of years of academic classes recommended and/or required by the colleges/Academy you are considering. Register for your senior classes accordingly. Generally, **Academies and selective colleges expect you to be taking 4-5 college preparatory courses your senior year from the following areas: math, language arts, social studies, science, and foreign language.** They are generally unimpressed with seniors who take only 2-3 courses from these areas their senior year. Selective colleges usually require a midyear report that is completed by your counselor, which lists your progress the first semester of your senior year. **First semester senior grades matter very much to these colleges.**
- = Establish a file folder at home for each Academy/college to which you are making application. Make a copy of your application and keep all communication from the institution in this folder.
- = Start working on your resume.
- = Work on your personal essay. Most selective colleges require one. The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate your writing skills while telling the college something about you as a person and a student. It is a creative endeavor. You should have it proofread by an English teacher and at least one other adult before submitting it.

THINGS THAT IMPRESS THE ADMISSIONS OFFICE

1. Get organized. If you are disorganized or tend to procrastinate, learn to present a picture of a student who plans and meets all deadlines. The college will never know what a wonderful person you are if your disorganization turns them off. If you need help, ask your friends and family to remind you to get it together early.
2. Make a good impression. Show your good manners. Example: if you have made an appointment for a tour, keep the appointment, or call and cancel. You will make a bad impression if you are a no-show. If you have had a tour of the campus, write and thank the college admission officer for the tour. They *do* keep track of interested students.
3. Take time with your application(s). Make sure it is neat and correct. Do online if possible. Use the same name (your full legal name, not a nickname) on all correspondence, housing and financial aid forms, transcripts, applications, and test registration forms. Make a copy of your application.

4. Write a strong essay. If you are required to write an essay as part of your application, it is considered to be your personal statement providing information that does not appear on your transcript, test reports, and other documents provided in the application process. The most effective essays will give the reader an insight into you and what makes you unique and different from every other applicant who looks just like you on paper.
5. Get your application in early. Make a good impression by applying early in the filing period. Early applicants often receive more attention than applicants just meeting the deadline. As a result, first applicants may have an edge when it comes to admission and financial aid. Don't procrastinate! Some private schools prefer early applications. Do not forget to include your application fee.
6. Meet all the financial aid or scholarship deadlines. Deadlines may vary at each college/university. Check to see which financial aid form is used at each school to which you are applying. **Meeting the deadline is critical!** Make a copy of completed financial aid forms.
7. Notify colleges of your final selection ASAP. It is a courtesy to the colleges and also to other students. In the spring of your senior year, you will make a final college selection. Notify the other colleges who have also offered you admission so that your reserved admission slot may be released to a waiting student.

WHAT DO COLLEGES LOOK FOR?

According to the Princeton Review, when college admissions counselors and "how to get into college" books describe the perfect college applicant, they all describe more or less the same person. This person, they say, has good grades, high test scores, a wide variety of extracurricular activities (editor of the newspaper and captain of the football team), a fascinating after-school job (teaching English to immigrant children), terrific hobbies (managing a food relief program in Africa, playing medieval instruments), and a shelf filled with awards for everything from writing poetry to playing tennis. This candidate lives on a farm, conducts unusual physics experiments, holds an elected political office in his/her town, restores old houses, coaches a Little League baseball team, and never once mentions SAT scores during an interview. WHO IS THIS PERSON?

In the real world, however, college admissions officers want to know you so they can match you with their college only if you will enjoy it and are likely to be successful there. Essentially colleges are looking for reasons to accept you, not to deny you admission. If an applicant comes alive on the page, shows initiative, has maintained a strong academic program of high school coursework, has respectable test scores, and demonstrates a well-developed interest in something outside of school, that student will receive every consideration in the application process.

The process of selection varies from college to college. At many colleges, several individuals will read your application before a decision is made. Sometimes a committee votes on applicants. The larger the school the less time is spent with your application, often less than 5 minutes. Small schools may look past weak grades or test scores if they see something special about you.

In your application, be yourself with your best foot forward. **If there are weaknesses in your record, face them head on and write about them without apologizing.** An improving record in your junior and senior years can often offset weaker grades in the freshman and sophomore years. Trying to hide anything about your record by not explaining it only adds questions and may cause your application to be set aside in favor of an applicant no stronger than you who took time to explain aspects of the record. Also, if you have had a bad semester or year, talk with your counselor about writing a letter of explanation on your behalf.

So what do colleges look for when considering an application for admission?

1. Transcript. Usually agreed upon as *the single most important document* in the application process, the transcript from freshman, sophomore, junior, and first semester of senior year details your final grades in all courses and the level of difficulty of the courses you took. Grades are compared with the courses taken. Admissions officers pay close attention to the level of difficulty in the student's course load, particularly in the senior year. The difficulty of curriculum is noted in conjunction with the cumulative GPA. Admission personnel compare the information on your transcript to the "Bozeman High School Profile" which they also receive. The "BHS Profile" provides information about the academics at Bozeman High School including highest levels in all courses, average SAT scores, number of AP courses, size of graduating class, and percentage of students attending two and four year colleges. An admissions officer will compare your transcript to what was possible to undertake academically at BHS as detailed in the Profile, and will then compare what you have done with the records of students from other high schools. Colleges, especially selective colleges, want to see a strong academic curriculum in all courses you have taken and will look for the following:

- 4 years of English
- 3-4 years of Social Studies
- 3-4 years of Math including Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry
- 3 years of Science
- 2-3 years of Foreign Language
- 1 year of Fine Arts

Students lacking these courses may be required to take remedial and/or additional courses at college. *Advice from the Admissions Office:* students should take as much college preparatory math, science, English, foreign language, and social studies in high school as they can handle academically.

2. Standardized test scores and/or rank in class. SAT and ACT scores are the only comparison colleges have that show performance on the same measure from high school to high school.

3. Recommendations. Colleges require between zero and three recommendations. Typically, each student's counselor writes a statement of recommendation attempting to describe the qualities, style, and achievements that make that student unique. With classes of over 400 seniors, the most compelling recommendations written by counselors are for those students the counselor knows well. Students should also ask two teachers who know the student and his or her work well to write a recommendation. In their recommendations, teachers attempt to detail the student's contributions, style, efforts, and accomplishments in the teacher's class. Recommendations that describe the "essence" of the student are very important supporting documents.

4. Personal Essay. Schools are interested in the student's expression of him or herself. Many colleges require student applicants to compose one or two essays. This is the student's chance to shine, to uniquely be him or herself. The essay is also important because it affords the college a chance to judge the student's writing ability. Sometimes admissions counselors say it is the essay that makes the difference in the student's acceptance.

5. Interests and Activities. Colleges are usually very open-minded about the student's involvement outside of the classroom. Admissions officers are mainly interested in knowing about what the student did besides study. Some students must work many hours; others become involved in school activities or community service. Still others must help out at home a great deal. Colleges are interested in hearing about time spent in a meaningful way. Some schools ask the student to state how much time per week was spent on a particular activity. They are not interested in a list that is so long that there could not be any meaningful involvement. For some students their interests and activities are really their defining experiences in high school. Explaining this in an essay helps the student to set him or herself apart from other applicants.

6. Special Talents. Send a tape of a musical or dramatic performance, slides of your artwork, a sample of your creative writing, or evidence of athletic ability. If your talent is in athletics, a contact with the college coach of your sport, as well as with the admissions office is important.

7. The “Legacy” Factor. Having relatives who have attended a particular school can sometimes tip the scales in a student’s favor if everything else is equal between two students. Having a family legacy at a school, however, will not make up for the more important factors just discussed.

8. The “X” Factor. The X Factor is those considerations colleges have when composing their freshman class that the applicant knows nothing about: desired percentages of certain majors, geographic mix, diversity of background and cultures, etc. Colleges want to enroll a varied group of freshmen who will make an educational impact on each other. These unknown factors may make or break an acceptance and they have nothing to do with the applicant’s ability, talent, academic record, test scores, or the like. They have to do with the college’s need, and are generally not disclosed to the applicant.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I had a weak start in high school. How can I recover from a bad semester?

First, concentrate on improving your grades through tutoring, extra work, and special effort. Work with teachers to develop good study skills. On your college application, explain what went wrong, how you have changed, and the ways you’ve matured. Admission officers look favorably on an applicant who recognized a problem and took positive steps to improve.

What kind of extracurricular activities are colleges interested in? How many should I have?

Colleges want to see a commitment, sustained interest, and involvement, not a list of activities you joined to “look good.” A personal passion for a certain activity is more favorable, as is a leadership position.

If colleges require teacher recommendations, which teachers should I ask?

Choose teachers who know you and can describe your classroom performance in terms not represented only by grades. Colleges prefer recommendations from academic-subject teachers you have had in 11th or 12th grades.

One of the questions on the application asks if I waive my rights to review the completed recommendations. Should I do that?

Colleges give much more weight to recommendations that are not reviewed by applicants. They suspect that if you review them prior to admission, you will submit only those that show you in the best possible light, therefore, they lose their objectivity.

In addition to academic performance and personal information, what else do colleges want to know about an applicant?

Colleges want as much relevant information as possible about a student so they can get a clear picture of the student’s abilities. They want to know whether there are family, educational, social, emotional, health, financial, language, or other situations that have put the student at a disadvantage and what progress the student has made to overcome those obstacles.

Should I submit extra information to the college?

Submit additional material on your behalf only if it is creative and says something positive and different about you that is not already included in your application. If your learning style is different and documented by a psychologist or physician, you must self-disclose such information to the admissions staff so they will have a clear picture of your abilities.

Will I be able to handle college-level work if I didn’t do well in high school?

You will probably have to work harder than ever before. The competition may be greater and the homework tougher. College is a big change and requires many adjustments; however, once enrolled, you will find you are not alone. Almost everyone is worried about succeeding, and if you seek help, it is available. Colleges provide supportive services, including tutoring, writing centers, personal counseling, aid in obtaining a part-time job, housing, and many others. Colleges want you to succeed and graduate.

What if I don't know what I want to major in?

You don't have to decide on a major when you apply to college. Most college students are undecided about the career they will pursue. College helps you explore options. During your first two years, you will take a variety of courses in several areas of specialization, allowing you to discover what you might be interested in.

What are the advantages of a two-year college?

There are lots of advantages to two-year colleges! Two-year colleges offer you a variety of choices for furthering your education. There are both degree programs and certificate programs. If you want to learn a specific skill, such as word processing, you can enroll in one or more individual certificate courses. The Associate in Applied Science degree program will qualify you for a job in your chosen field after you graduate in two years. The Associate in Arts and Associate in Science programs will help you transfer to a four-year college if you wish. Two-year colleges are often less expensive and they offer a quality education in a shorter period of time than a four-year college or university.

IV. COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTS

Almost all colleges use tests as part of their admission process. Some use them for the selection process while others may use the results for placement purposes. The four basic admission tests are:

ACT:	Used by two and four year colleges and scholarship programs. Basically an achievement test measuring what a student has learned in the areas of English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. An optional Writing test is offered.
ASSET:	Used by community colleges and tech schools to assess reading, writing, and math for appropriate placement in classes. The test is given at the college or tech school.
SAT REASONING TEST	Used by four-year colleges and scholarship programs. Assesses verbal, reasoning, and writing skills and processes
SAT SUBJECT TEST	Subject tests used by some colleges for admission or placement.

WHICH TEST YOU SHOULD YOU TAKE?

- Find out whether the colleges to which you're applying require one test rather than the other. In Montana, all colleges will accept either test. Nationally, most colleges will accept either test, but you should check the information from colleges you are considering to see if they prefer one or the other.
- If it doesn't matter which test you take. Decide which test is better suited to your skills and will likely result in a better score. To do this, take one SAT practice test and one ACT practice test and then compare your scores and how you feel about the different tests.

As you register for either the ACT or the SAT, you need to know that there are three kinds of codes:

High School Code: where you attend high school. This code is online, stamped on all SAT/ACT registration packets obtained in the BHS Guidance Office, and posted on the wall of the Guidance Office. **The High School Code for BHS is 270100.**

College and Scholarship Codes: where you want your scores sent. These codes can be found in the SAT/ACT registration booklet and online.

Test Center Code: where you will be taking the test. This code can be found in the SAT/ACT registration booklet and online. It is very important to enter the correct code for the Test Center so you will have a seat on test day.

SHOULD I TAKE THE TEST MORE THAN ONCE?

You should definitely retest if you had any problems during the test, such as misunderstanding the directions or not feeling well. You may also want to retake the test if you are not satisfied that your scores accurately represent your abilities in the areas tested. If you take the ACT and see a discrepancy between your ACT scores and your high school grades, or if you subsequently complete coursework or an intensive review in the areas covered by the ACT, retesting may be beneficial.

It is recommended that students take the test twice, once at the end of their junior year, and once again as a senior. There are no limitations on how many times you can take the tests. You may take the SAT and/or the ACT as often as you wish.

V. PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Just about everyone is interested in information on financial aid. Don't assume that you can't afford a particular college or university until you have investigated all aspects of financial aid.

NEED-BASED AND MERIT-BASED FINANCIAL AID

There are two basic categories of financial aid: need-based and merit-based.

Need-Based Financial Aid: Need-based financial aid is money that goes to families who do not have sufficient financial resources to pay for college. When determining eligibility for need-based financial aid, *the family's financial situation is the only thing that is considered. A student's academic record is not a factor.*

Merit-Based Financial Aid: Students are awarded merit-based financial aid based on outstanding abilities, talents, and/or accomplishments, or ties to an organization such as a service club or labor union. When awarding merit-based financial aid, *the financial situation of the family is usually not considered.*

Most financial aid is based on financial need, so most financial aid is therefore need-based.

THE FOUR TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

Grants. Grants are need-based. They do not have to be repaid and you do not need to work to earn them. Grant aid comes from federal and state governments and from individual colleges.

Scholarships. Scholarships can be need and/or merit-based. Most colleges have scholarship money that they award on a first come, first served basis for students who meet specific academic requirements. Financial aid counselors also recommend that students register with one of the scholarship search engines such as www.fastweb.com, and others which can be found in the Internet Resources section of this Guide for a customized scholarship search. Many scholarships are awarded based on merit, ethnic background, or personal interests regardless of financial need.

Work Study. Money the student earns by working at a college job, usually 10-15 hours a week. Work study positions are need-based. Student employment and work-study aid helps students pay for education costs such as books, supplies, and personal expenses. Work-study is a federal program which provides students with part-time employment to help meet their financial needs and gives them work experience at the same time.

Loans. Borrowed money that must be repaid. Most financial aid comes in the form of loans that must be repaid. Most loans that are awarded based on financial need are low-interest loans sponsored by the federal government. These loans are subsidized by the government so no interest accrues until you begin repayment after graduation.

To qualify for any financial aid students must maintain a 2.0 GPA each semester and be enrolled half-time or more.

FINANCIAL AID FORMS

The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). The FAFSA is the federal form that determines how much money a family can afford to pay for college. Most colleges and universities require the FAFSA to establish eligibility for need-based and some merit-based financial aid. In most cases, families seeking financial aid must submit a FAFSA. Parents who do not think they will be eligible for

need-based financial aid should still complete a FAFSA as some programs want to know that a student is not eligible for need-based aid before they award merit-based aid.

Filling out the FAFSA is much like filling out a tax form. It asks parents and students for information about income, assets, debts, etc. for the previous year—information which must be taken directly from the parents and students' income tax filing form.

It is highly recommended that the FAFSA be filed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Online filing assures greater accuracy and faster processing of your application. Please remember the application is free.

The FAFSA should be filed as soon as possible your Senior year for priority consideration of financial aid distribution by colleges. There is no cost in submitting a FAFSA.

Approximately 4-6 weeks after submitting the FAFSA, a Student Aid Report (SAR) is sent to the student and to the colleges the student listed on the FAFSA. The SAR will show the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). This is the amount colleges will expect the family to contribute towards college expenses the following year. With financial aid in its various forms, the colleges will attempt to make up the difference between the EFC and the cost of attending their institution. This is called the financial aid package.

The College Financial Aid Form. In addition to the FAFSA, some colleges require that students also complete their institutional financial aid application.

The Profile. The Profile is a one-page need analysis form that gives colleges and scholarship programs additional information on a family's financial situation. Nationally, about 300 colleges and 125 scholarship programs require that families complete the Profile in addition to the FAFSA.

The Profile is available online at <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp>. The form and website list schools that ask for the Profile. It can be submitted as early as October of the senior year. There is a fee for filing a Profile.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are not granted automatically; you must work, search, and apply for them.

- Who should apply for scholarships? All students! Any student interested in attending a technical college, community college, or a 4-year school should consider applying for free money to help pay for school.
- When should you apply for scholarships? Most scholarships are offered during your senior year. You should start to familiarize yourself with the process beginning second semester of your junior year.
- Where can you find out about local scholarships? Each month new local scholarships are posted in the College and Career Center and on the Naviance webpage. You should also check with your parents' place of employment and any clubs or organizations you or they belong to, as often local organizations offer scholarships to members.
- Where can you find out about national scholarships? Go to any of the scholarship search sites such as www.fastweb.com and others listed in the College Search section on p. 5 and the Internet Resources section of this Guide for lists of national scholarships. You will be asked a series of qualifying questions and then get information on how to apply for scholarships for which you meet requirements. You may want to set up a separate e-mail account just for scholarship notifications from the scholarship search engines you use.

□ What items are usually required besides the application? Many scholarships require you to submit a resume, a transcript, letters of recommendation, and/or an essay. Applying for scholarships takes organization and time but it is time well-spent given the potential for the money you may receive.

MONTANA UNIVERSITY HONOR SCHOLARSHIP

- The MUS Honor Scholarship is a 4-year renewable scholarship that waives the tuition and registration fee at one of the Montana University Systems campuses or one of the three community colleges. Its average value at a Montana 4-year college is \$2500 a year or \$10,000 for four years.
- A recipient must use the scholarship within 9 months after high school graduation.
- Students must maintain a 3.4 cumulative GPA while enrolled in college to retain the scholarship.

To apply for the MUS Honor Scholarship students must:

- Take the ACT or SAT by December 30th of your senior year
- Apply for admission to one of the eligible colleges by January 9 of your senior year
- Complete an MUS Honor Scholarship application available from your counselor
- Attach a copy of your acceptance letter from the eligible college to the scholarship application
- Submit the completed packet to your counselor by February 15th of your senior year.

Any eligible student who does not submit the required MUS Honor Scholarship application and acceptance letter from an eligible college by the deadline date of February 15th will be deemed to have relinquished the scholarship.

APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

= Meet the deadline. If you do not meet the deadline, you will not be considered for the scholarship.

= Present yourself well. Make sure your application represents your best work. As with college applications, follow directions carefully. Making mistakes in spelling, word usage, and grammar is a sure way to get your application put at the bottom of the pile.

= Keep your resume to one page. Scholarship review committees have many applications to read and a 2-3 page document can count against you.

= Be yourself in your essay. Do not write what you think others want to hear. Don't be pretentious or exaggerate to impress--readers pick up on your lack of true voice. Instead, write about things that you know and that make you unique. Give examples that show what you are talking about and that make you "come to life" for the reader.

NCAA

Student athletes who plan to compete in Division I and II intercollegiate athletics must be certified as eligible for competition and financial aid by the NCAA. To be certified, students must meet specific NCAA academic requirements in high school. Eligibility forms must be filed online or mailed at the end of the junior year. Complete information for prospective student athletes is available on the NCAA Clearinghouse website <http://eligibilitycenter.org>.

Students enrolling in a Division I college and want to participate in athletics or receive an athletics scholarship during their freshman year must

- Graduate from high school or earn a General Equivalency Diploma (GED)
- Complete these 16 core courses:
 - 4 years of English
 - 3 years of math (algebra I or higher)

- 2 years of natural or physical science including one year of lab science
- 1 extra year of English, math, or science
- 2 years of social studies
- 4 years of extra core courses from any category above or foreign language or philosophy
- Earn a minimum required GPA (2.0) in the above core courses

COMMON MISTAKES IN PURSUING COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID

- = Missing deadlines. There is no forgiveness for missed deadlines. Applications will not be considered if received after the posted deadline.
- = Not applying for financial aid because you think you won't qualify.
- = Assuming expensive private colleges are out of reach. Some may offer significant financial aid.
- = Waiting too long to file the FAFSA with the U.S .Department of Education. This paperwork determines how much federal aid families receive and requires figures from the current year's tax return which can be estimated and corrected later. The FAFSA should be filed as soon as possible your Senior year.
- = Not applying for financial aid through the college. This is often the best source of assistance and can be the foundation for all other financial aid received.
- = Assuming financial aid from the college will continue past the first year. Families should confirm any financial aid with the college and determine what is required for the scholarship to renew.
- = Failing to understand that financing college often means borrowing money and working. Families need to have open financial discussion with their student prior to selecting and applying to colleges.
- = Paying companies to search for financial aid or scholarships. Paid services are often scams.
- = Assuming students will get a good financial aid offer from an out-of-state public college. Schools often reserve their need-based aid for residents of their state.

FINANCIAL AID WEBSITES

Federal Student Aid on the Web	www.studentaid.ed.gov
FastWeb	www.fastweb.com
FinAid	www.finaid.org
FAFSA	www.fafsa.ed.gov
Federal Direct Loans	www.ed.gov/DirectLoan
Financial Aid by State	www.finaid.org/otheraid/state.phtml

VI. TIMELINES FOR PLANNING LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

JUNIOR YEAR

Make every effort to do your best academically this year because your grade point average for the 6 semesters ending in June will be used to determine class rank and will be the record colleges look at when they review your transcript.

Begin the college selection process, and make sure you are meeting NCAA requirements if you want to play Division I or II sports in college.

Study college admission requirements and choose appropriate courses this year and next to meet entrance requirements.

September

- = Talk to your parents about your reasons for going to college. What reasons are most important to you? What are you looking for in a college experience?
- = Attend the College Fair at MSU

October

- = Take the PSAT. Junior year scores may qualify a student for the National Merit Scholarship Competition. If you wish to receive free information from colleges, indicate on the PSAT answer form that you want to participate in the Student Search.
- = Visit with college reps that come to BHS
- = If you are interested in a Military Academy or ROTC, get information now

November

- = Keep your grades up! Colleges look at the Junior year very closely. Junior year grades are extremely important in the college admission process, because they are a measure of how well you do in advanced, upper-level courses. Grades are also used to determine scholarships and grants for which you may be eligible.
- = If you will require financial aid, start researching your options for grants, scholarships, and work-study programs.

December

- = Continue to evaluate the type of colleges that interest you.
- = Plan holiday visits to colleges.
- = Research college options through talking to seniors and graduates home for the holidays.

January

- = Check your credits and when you register for your senior year classes, make sure they meet graduation requirements, are relevant to your post high school plans, and include a strong core of academic classes.
- = Begin to make a preliminary list of colleges you would like to investigate further. Use the internet and the college resources in the Guidance Office.
- = Ask your parents for your Social Security Number if you do not know it, as it is required on many college applications. If you were never issued a SSN, contact the Social Security Office as soon as possible to get one.

February

- = Begin to narrow your list of college choices.
- = If portfolios, audition tapes, writing samples, or other evidence of talent are required, begin to put these together.

March

- = Write, telephone, or use the internet to request admission and financial aid information from the colleges on your list. There is no charge and no obligation to obtain general information about admission and financial aid.
- = Begin discussing college finances with your parents and develop a plan to pay for college. Plan now for summer part-time jobs if your family expects you to pay for part of your education.

April

- = Register for the May/June SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests. Not all SAT Subject Tests are given on every test date, so check the calendar carefully to determine when the subject tests you want are offered. Register for the June ACT if you want to take that test.
- = Continue to evaluate your list of colleges. Eliminate schools from the original list that no longer interest you and add others as appropriate.
- = Keep up a good level of academic achievement. Colleges like to see an upward trend in your GPA.

May

- = Begin visiting colleges, if you have not done so already. Phone to set up appointments. Interviews are a good idea. Many colleges will tell you they are optional, but an interview will show interest, enthusiasm, and initiative on your part and provide an excellent opportunity to have your questions answered.
- = Take the SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests
- = Take AP exams if appropriate.
- = Review your senior schedule to be sure it includes all classes necessary to graduate and be admitted to college.

June

- = Finish the year strong. This is your most important semester for college.
- = Prepare a college-planning portfolio that includes all your records of courses taken, extracurricular activities, community service, achievements, and awards.
- = After school gets out, get on the road to visit colleges. Seeing the college firsthand, taking a tour, and talking to students can be the greatest help in deciding whether or not a school is right for you. Although it is ideal to visit colleges during the academic year, going in the summer will be valuable. Admissions offices employ their students to give tours and answer questions from prospective students and their parents.
- = Take the SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests, and/or the ACT.

July

- = If you are seeking an athletic scholarship, make contact in person or by mail with the coaches at schools of your interest. Include a resume of your accomplishments.
- = Register with the NCAA, <http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net> if you hope to play Division I or II sports. You need to have completed your 6th semester of high school to register.
- = READ. You may be asked to discuss what you've read by a college admissions officer.
- = Work on rough drafts for college essays and your resume or biography.

August

- = Continue to refine your list of potential colleges and universities
- = Begin preparing for the actual application process: draft essays, collect writing samples and assemble portfolios or audition tapes.

SENIOR YEAR

Maintain or continue to improve your academic standing. Most colleges look unfavorably upon an applicant whose senior year shows evidence of less than a strong academic course load.

Apply to colleges, make a decision, and finish high school with pride in yourself and your accomplishments.

September

- = Make sure you have all applications required for college admission and financial aid. Write, phone, or use the internet to request missing information.
- = Make sure you know all of your deadlines. They vary and it is essential to meet all deadlines.
- = Register for October/November SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests, and/or September/October ACT.
- = If the college requires recommendations, ask the appropriate people to write on your behalf at least 3 weeks before you need them. Provide all necessary forms, any special instructions, and a stamped, addressed envelope to the people writing your recommendation. Be thoughtful—write thank you notes to those who write recommendations for you.
- = Decide if you want to apply for early decision or early action.
- = Visit with college reps that come to BHS.
- = Check your credits and course requirements for graduation.
- = Register for the College Scholarship Service (CSS/Financial Aid Profile) IF required by the private college where you plan to apply.
- = Attend the College Fair at MSU.
- = Decide the number of colleges and the cost for applying.
- = Remind your parents to gather financial records.
- = Finish all rough draft applications and essays. Have them proofread.

October

- = If applying for early decision or early action, send in your application now. Also prepare applications for back- up schools. Remember, if you are accepted under the early decision option, you are expected to enroll at that college and to withdraw all other applications.
- = Register for the December/January SAT Reasoning and/or Subject Tests, or December ACT if you have not completed the required tests or if you are not happy with your previous test scores and think you can do better.
- = Visit with college reps that come to BHS.
- = Attend college weekends.
- = Complete all college applications by Halloween.
- = Parents and students should complete the FAFSA. Check to make sure your colleges do not require any other financial aid forms, and if they do, contact the college's financial aid office.

November

- = Take the SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests if appropriate. Have test scores sent to the colleges on your list.
- = Register for the December ACT if you need to take it.
- = Continue completing applications. Make copies of all applications before mailing.
- = Keep all records, test score reports and copies of applications for admission and financial aid. **Do not throw anything away until at least the end of your first year in college.** Having detailed records will save you time and effort should anything be lost or should you decide in to apply in the future to other colleges.
- = Finish all rough draft applications and essays. Have them proofread.
- = Investigate scholarship options.
- = Keep your grades up. Colleges DO look at semester and year-end grades.

= If your transcript is a roller coaster of ups and downs (grades that vary from A to F) or has any quirks that need to be explained, explain what happened during the tough periods and what, if anything, you learned. Include this in your application.

December

= If you applied for early decision, you should have an answer by now. If you are accepted, follow the instructions for admitted students. If the decision is deferred until spring or you are denied, submit applications now to other colleges.
 = Take SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests and/or ACT.
 = Plan holiday visits to colleges.
 = Make sure you receive the Student Aid Report (SAR) from your FAFSA filing. If you have not received it after four weeks, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at (319) 447-5665.

January

= Request second semester transcripts be sent to colleges that request them.
 = Stay in contact with representatives from the colleges you have applied to.
 = Keep working in your classes! Grades and classes continue to count throughout your senior year.

February

= Complete scholarship applications. You may be eligible for more scholarships than you think, so apply for as many as you can.
 = Thank teachers counselors, and anyone who helped you through the process.
 = Beware of senioritis. *Colleges accept students on the condition that they maintain their grades and they can rescind the acceptance if a student's grades decline!*

March

= Stay focused. Keep on studying!
 = Contact colleges with any new information or if you have had a schedule change.

April

= Do not take rolling admission applications for granted. These schools may reach their maximum class size quickly, so the earlier you apply, the more availability there may be.
 = Review your college acceptances and financial aid awards. Be sure to compare financial aid packages in your decision-making process. If you are positive you will not enroll at one or more of the colleges which accepted you, notify those colleges of your decision. If you know which college you will attend, send your tuition deposit and follow all other instructions for admitted students. You must decide which offer of admission to accept by May 1 (postmark date).
 = Submit applications to community colleges and take placement tests.
 = If you are wait-listed, there are some things you can do:

- write to the director of admissions, indicate your intent to attend the school, and ask for a review of your folder. State your reasons for requesting a review.
- consider attending your second choice college or university for a year. You may have a better chance as a transfer applicant than as a graduating senior if you can prove that you are capable of high achievement.
- submit additional applications to colleges with rolling admission.
- after June 1, inquire about unanticipated openings.

May

= By May 1, decide on the one college that you will attend and send in your tuition deposit. Notify the other colleges that accepted you that you have selected another college.
 = Take AP exams if appropriate and request that your AP scores be sent to the college you will attend.
 = Notify your counselor of any scholarships/awards you have received for recognition in the Graduation Program.

- = Fill out housing forms if available.
- = Start looking for a summer job—you may need the money!
- = Be proud of yourself. You have completed a difficult task.

June

- = Request that your final transcript be sent to the college you will attend. Fill out a Request for Transcript form in [Naviance](#).
- = Notify the college you will attend of any private scholarships or grants you will be receiving.
- = Know when the payment for tuition, room and board, meal plans, etc. is due.
- = Graduate!!

CONGRATULATIONS!!!!!!

VII. INTERNET RESOURCES

COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTING

American College Testing (ACT)--<http://www.actstudent.org> Provides valuable continuing education information. Student can register online for the ACT assessment.

College Board Online--<http://www.collegeboard.com> A huge college planning resource. Students can do SAT tutorials and register for SAT online.

Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.htm> The PSAT is recommended for college-bound juniors and sophomores. This site provides specific information on the PSAT program.

Educational Testing Service—<http://www.ets.org>

The site provides information about the SAT, PSAT, AP, and TOEFL tests, preparation information and sample questions.

SAT/ACT Preparation—<http://www.number2.com> Includes free test preparation tutorials and sample questions for the SAT and ACT.

COLLEGE PLANNING/SELECTION/ADMISSION

Montana State University—<http://www.montana.edu>

University of Montana—<http://www.umt.edu>

Both sites provide links for prospective students on admissions, academics, athletics, and student, faculty, and staff resources.

Think College—<http://www.ed.gov/students/prep/college/thinkcollege/edlite-index.html>

A U.S. Dept. of Education site full of tips for parents and links to other useful websites. It is great for those hoping to send a student to college in 18 years or just a few months.

Peterson's—<http://www.petersons.com> A comprehensive site for searching for public and private colleges, summer programs, preparing for the ACT/SAT, study abroad, financial aid, and career exploration. In addition, specialty sections include help with admissions essays and strategies for being recruited by colleges.

College Net—<http://www.collegenet.com> Offers financial resources, a search engine and internet guide to colleges and universities. User can browse by specifying criteria—geography, tuition, enrollment size, etc.

College View—<http://www.collegeview.com> College, career, and financial aid information.

Searchable database of over 3000 2 & 4-year schools.

Montana Career Information System—<http://www.smartaboutcollege.org> Click on "enter the MCIS" to gain access to this powerful program of search possibilities for national or Montana schools, programs of study, apprenticeships, financial aid, and military possibilities. It also includes a career interest profiler which links interests to possible careers and their outlook for the future. Students can create an online portfolio.

Year-By-Year Planning—<http://www.nacacnet.org> What should a freshman, sophomore, junior, and a senior in high school be doing to prepare for college? Check the calendars on the site of the National Association for College Admission Counseling for useful information.

Steps to College—http://www.nacac.com/p&s_steps.html This is an online newsletter produced by NACAC with articles focused on college selection, making the transition from high school to college, etc.

College Planning—<http://www.icansucceed.org> College preparation, career planning, choosing a college, financial aid, and debt management are some of the related information available on this site.

College Confidential—http://www.collegeconfidential.com/college_search This is one of the better sources of information on college-related topics from Ivy League admissions to evaluating college rankings, from college books and book reviews to college counseling and paying for a university education. Be aware that the site is offered by a group of people who do college advisement as a business. For a fairly hefty price, they help with college admissions.

Careers & Colleges—<http://www.careersandcolleges.com> Search over 4000 colleges/universities, and 1.7 million scholarships and other sources of financial aid.

Go College.com—<http://www.gocollege.com> This link will match your interests with a college. It will allow you to narrow down colleges according to majors, grades, scores, and tuition. Also provided are online applications to over 850 colleges throughout the U.S. Practice ACT and SAT questions are available as well as financial aid information.

The College Board—<http://www.collegeboard.com> Offers a powerful search engine for over 3000 colleges and universities. User builds a step-by-step customized search profile that describes schools the student wants. Can be downloaded for future reference.

American Universities—<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/au/>

This site provides a direct link to over 1500 American colleges and universities, as well as a link to a database of Canadian Universities, other international schools, and community colleges.

World Wide Colleges and Universities—<http://www.globaled.us/wwcu>

This site has a wonderful database of schools around the world arranged by continent. Along with a link to the home language home page, the site also provides direct links to the school's International Relations Office and background on the system of higher education for each country around the world.

SAT/ACT Optional Schools—<http://www.fairtest.org> Do all schools put a lot of emphasis on test scores? No. An organization called FairTest has compiled a list of schools that either do not use test scores or use them minimally in making admissions decisions regarding their incoming freshmen.

Specialized Schools—<http://www.education.org> This site has information about schools with programs of study in Art, Business, Computers, Cooking/Culinary, Environmental Education, or Fashion. They also have a listing of medical schools. The site lists program offerings in these areas regardless of whether it is a public or private school or a certificate, associate, or bachelors degree program. You can link directly to the schools so the content is fresh and accurate.

U.S. Two-Year Colleges—<http://cset.sp.utoledo.edu/twoyrcol.html> This site lists community colleges, technical colleges, junior colleges, branches of 4-yr colleges which focus on associate degree education, and accredited 2-yr proprietary schools. Choose schools by state.

Vocational-Technical Schools—<http://www.rwm.org/rwm> If you're looking for an educational program to become a jeweler, plumber, cosmetologist, legal secretary, mechanic, etc. there are many private post-secondary vocational schools listed in this database which is organized first by state, then by programs offered.

The Common Application—<http://www.commonapp.org> The Common Application is the recommended application form of over 200 selective independent schools and a few public

universities. Students simply complete one form, then copy it and send it to each school to which they wish to apply, thus eliminating a great deal of duplication of efforts by students, counselors, and teachers. The Common Application may be downloaded to either Mac or PC from this site.

MILITARY ACADEMIES/ROTC

Army: U.S. Military Academy at West Point—<http://www.usma.edu>

Navy: U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis—<http://www.usna.edu>

Air Force: U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs—<http://www.usafa.af.mil>

Army ROTC: <http://www.armyrotc.com>

Navy/Marines ROTC: <http://www.nrotc.navy.mil>

Air Force ROTC: <http://www.afrotc.com>

RANKING/COMPARING SCHOOLS

The Princeton Review--<http://www.princetonreview.com> Students can check out over 300 colleges rated "best" by the Princeton Review. Can also take a practice SAT and have it scored.

College and University Ranking Sites—<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/edx/rankings.htm>

This is an excellent site developed by the University of Illinois-Urbana Library. The first link read should be the "Caution and Controversy" link. This site goes on to list national rankings of schools based on student reports, services for the disabled, minorities, activism, and research. If you're into rankings, this is your site.

US News & World Report's "America's Best Colleges"—

<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/cohome.htm> Each year *US News & World Report* does a special issue ranking colleges according to a number of criteria and publishes their book entitled *America's Best Colleges*. Save your money on the book by checking their site.

Guide for Parents—<http://www.guideforparents.com/rankings.htm> This site offers more rankings and critiques regarding their usefulness and place in college selection. This also includes *Kiplinger* magazine's listing of the best value in public colleges

<http://www.kiplinger.com/tools/colleges>

FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS

Fast Web—<http://fastweb.com> On this site you can enter information about yourself, along with your e-mail address and FastWeb will locate scholarships that fit your profile. Even after you get your first list of matches, it will e-mail you when other matches are found. At no cost, this site is similar to the job done by private search companies which can cost from \$10 to hundreds of dollars.

FinAid!—<http://www.finaid.org> This is a top-quality link to many financial aid related sites, ranging from institutions to government programs to scholarship scam alerts. This is an excellent site for anyone looking for money to go to school. They also have a section answering questions about maximizing your aid eligibility.

FreSch!—<http://www.freschinfo.com> Another free scholarship search service, FreSch! has a database of over 2000 sources of scholarships, representing approximately 169,000 awards. After you have searched for scholarships, browse the database and look for additional scholarships that you might be eligible for but didn't necessarily match your exact search specifications.

FastAID—<http://www.fastaid.com/fastap/index.asp> Free Scholarship Search bills itself as "the largest private sector scholarship database in the world." This site is from the authors of "The Scholarship

Book" from Prentice Hall, and they have been researching scholarships for many years. Some users report finding scholarships here that were not matched on any other search.

Scholarships.com—<http://www.scholarships.com> Site provides a free search of a database of scholarships with nearly 3000 sources,

Federal Student Aid—<http://studentaid.ed.gov> This is a site that provides lots of information and links to helpful sites for preparing, choosing, applying to, funding, and attending college.

FAFSA on the Web—<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov> This is the US Department of Education's site for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. A PIN (personal identification number) is needed to complete the online version and this should be acquired before you actually sit down to do the FAFSA online. Options for completing the FAFSA are to complete and submit the online version or to complete the paper form and mail it for processing. If you are filing a federal income tax return, you should complete it before filing the FAFSA. The paper version of the FAFSA is available in the BHS Guidance Office.

College Financial Aid/Sallie Mae—<http://www.salliemae.com> Site provides interactive calculators allowing users to calculate the cost of college, estimate loan payments, etc.

OPTIONS OTHER THAN COLLEGE

Community Service Opportunities

AmeriCorps—<http://www.americorps.gov> Interested in giving some time in order to pay for education? AmeriCorps is for people at least 17 years old who wish to learn new skills, acquire leadership, and gain a sense of satisfaction from taking on responsibilities that directly affect people's lives. Members receive a modest living allowance and health coverage while in the program. After a year of service they may receive education awards of nearly \$5000 to finance their education.

City Year—<http://www.cityyear.org> City Year is one of over 1000 local and national AmeriCorps programs across the country. City Year brings together young adults, ages 17-24, from diverse ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds for a demanding year of full-time community service, leadership development, and civic engagement to meet the nation's critical need in areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human services in cities throughout the United States.

Study Abroad Programs

Study Abroad.com—<http://highschool.studyabroad.com> This is a commercial site with paid advertising, but it has value as a resource for the high school student looking for a summer, semester, or year-long educational program in another country. The site allows students to select a country (and even a few major foreign cities) for study programs. Programs listed are connected with non-profit organizations, businesses, and colleges/universities. One of the sections is the Study Abroad Guide, an online handbook which provides information on what can be gained from study abroad, selecting a program that fits your needs, planning, making adjustments in a new and different culture, etc.

Rotary Youth Exchange—http://www.rotary.org/programs/youth_ex/index.html

Looking to participate in a study abroad program? There are many, and the Rotary Youth Exchange program is open to students ages 15-19.

AFS Intercultural Programs—<http://www.afs.org> The AFS program is one of the most respected study abroad programs in the United States, offering student exchange programs and community service programs in foreign countries.

Youth For Understanding—<http://www.yfu.org> This organization has student exchange programs in 35 countries providing students the options of spending a summer, a semester, or a year with a family abroad.

Apprenticeships/Job Corps

Job Corps—<http://www.jobcorps.gov> The official website for the Job Corps, the nation's largest and most comprehensive residential education and job training program for people ages 16-24. The program offers occupational exploration and vocational education at its 30 conservation centers. Occupational trades offered include construction, auto mechanics and repair, business and clerical, retail trades, health occupations, computer occupations, and culinary arts.

Office of Apprenticeship Training—http://www.doleta.gov/atels_bat Apprenticeship programs by state; eligibility and requirements for apprenticeships.

RESOURCES FOR THE STUDENT ATHLETE

NCAA Clearinghouse—<http://www.eligibilitycenter.org> Student athletes hoping to compete as Division I or II college athletes must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. Registration should be submitted after the completion of the junior year. This allows interested NCAA member schools to obtain accurate student records from a central source. Registration is very easy and may be done in a few minutes on the web. There is a \$30 fee which is payable by credit card. To register, click on "Registration Form for U.S. Students." To download the form to fill it out and mail it, click on "The Guide for College-Bound Student Athletes." This NCAA site also allows users to find the List of Approved Core Courses offered by a high school. Click on "List of approved Core Courses" and enter the 6-digit CEEB code for the high school or the school's name, then scroll down and click "submit query." The school name and address then come up with course categories listed. Select those desired and "submit" to get a complete list of all courses approved by the NCAA Clearinghouse. **The CEEB code for Bozeman High School is 270100.**

National Junior College Athletic Association—<http://www.njcaa.org> The NJCAA is similar to the NCAA but is the organization for community (junior) colleges. Search for school by name or for sports. Links to the schools are provided, making for easy contact.

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics—<http://www.naia.org/index.html> Many small private colleges and universities are members of the NAIA. This site lists schools, sports, etc. for the NAIA.

GLOSSARY: TERMS YOU NEED TO KNOW

ACT: The American College Test is a group of tests required or recommended by most colleges as part of the admission process. The tests measure English, math, reading, and science reasoning. ACT scores range from 1-36.

Admission Requirements: a set of rules, including high school preparation established by each college for a student to be accepted at that school.

Advanced Placement (AP): a test given to high school students, usually at the end of their junior or senior year, after they have completed certain AP courses. Some colleges give advanced standing and/or credit for these tests if a student earns a score of 3, 4, or 5.

Advanced Standing: when a student has completed more than 12 college credits.

Aid package: a combination of financial aid (possibly including scholarships, grants, loans, and/or work) determined by a college financial aid office.

Associate Degree (A.A): a degree granted by a college or university for a program that requires two years of study.

Award Letter: a letter notifying the student of the types and amounts of financial aid (scholarships, grants, loans, and/or work) being offered to attend their college, providing the student with the opportunity to accept or decline the offer.

Bachelors Degree: a degree granted by a college or university after satisfactory completion of a four-year program.

CEEB Code: a six-digit code number assigned to each high school in the United States. **The CEEB code for Bozeman High School is 270100**

Class Rank: a student's standing as compared with that of the other members of the class based on GPA in grades 9-12.

COA: Cost of Attendance. The total estimated amount, including personal expenses, that will cost to go to college. It is usually expressed as a yearly figure and is used to calculate financial need.

College Board: the company that provides the SAT, SAT Subject tests, PSAT, and TOEFL.

Common Application: an application form that is accepted by many selective, mostly private, colleges in the United States. Students complete it once and are then able to apply to multiple schools. The Common Application can be downloaded from <http://www.commonap.org>

Conditional Admission: acceptance to a college even though the student does not meet minimum admission requirements. The student must enroll in remedial courses or otherwise satisfy conditions prescribed by the college before regular admission is granted.

Credit hour: a unit of academic credit that often represents one hour of class time per week for a period of study.

Deferment: 1) if referring to admission, deferment permits an accepted student to postpone enrollment for a certain length of time; 2) if referring to financial aid, deferment is a postponement or delay of payment obligation on a student loan.

Degree: titles given to college graduates upon completion of a program. A two-year degree is an Associate Degree; a four-year degree is usually a Bachelors Degree; and advanced degrees requiring additional years of college are Masters Degree and Doctors Degrees.

Early Action: a college acceptance plan in which a student applies by November and receives a decision by mid-December. The decision is *not binding* on the student and the student may still apply and enroll at another college.

Early Decision: a college acceptance plan whereby a student applies by November and receives a decision by mid-December. Applying for Early Decision has the effect of entering into a contract. If accepted, the student is *obligated* to enroll in that college.

EFC: Expected Family Contribution. This is the amount that a family is expected to contribute toward a student's education based on the FAFSA.

Elective: a course needed for graduation credit, but not one of the specific course requirements.

Financial Aid: money which may be derived from a variety of sources—grant, loan, scholarships, work-study—which helps pay for college costs. The "package" of funds is determined by family financial need and the availability of funds.

Financial Need: the difference between the cost of education and what the family or the applicant can reasonably be expected to contribute.

Fee Waiver: permits financially eligible students to submit college applications or test registration forms without the fee. The waiver must be granted by a high school or college.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The primary form used to determine your eligibility for financial aid.

Grant: an award of money which does not have to be repaid. Typically grants are based on financial need.

Major: the subject of study in which the student chooses to specialize.

Masters Degree: a degree usually requiring one or more years in a planned course of study following the Bachelors Degree.

Minor: approximately 18 credits in an area outside the major area of study.

Open Admissions: a college admission policy of admitting high school graduates and other adults without consideration of conventional academic qualifications as subject studied, high school grades earned, and standardized test scores. Almost all applications with high school or equivalent diplomas are accepted.

Package: the financial aid offer from the college, usually made up of a combination of grants, loans, and/or scholarship money.

Pre-Professional: referring to courses that prepare students for later specialized or technical training. For example, "pre-med" includes pre-professional courses in chemistry and biology, which are prerequisite for later specialization in medicine.

Pre-requisite: courses, test scores, and/or grade level that must be completed before taking a specific course.

Private College: a school that is not supported by state taxes; also referred to as an independent college.

Profile: a customized financial aid form prepared by the College Board used by private colleges and universities to award their financial funds to students.

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholar Qualifying Test): a shortened version of the SAT offered in October for high school juniors. Scores are reported on a scale of 20-80.

Registrar: the administrative officer of a college or university who maintains the academic records.

Residency status: in public institutions, the classification of a student for tuition purposes as a resident or non-resident of the state in which the school is located.

Rolling Admissions: an admission plan whereby a college gives an admission decision as soon as possible after the application is completed.

ROTC: Reserve Officers Training Corps units in college that offer two and four year programs of military training culminating in an officer's commission.

SAT: Administered by the College Board, the SAT is a test of verbal, mathematical, and writing abilities given by the College Entrance Examination Board. The test is required or recommended by many colleges as part of their admission process. Scores are reported in each section on a scale of 200-800.

SAT SUBJECT TESTS: tests that are taken in specific subject areas. Some selective colleges require up to three tests as part of the admissions process. SAT Subject Tests cannot be taken on the same day as the SAT.

Scholarships: a gift of money awarded for achievement, skills, talents, and/or financial need.

SAR: Student Aid Report. The information you will receive approximately 2-4 weeks after your FAFSA has been processed. It will report your Expected Family Contribution.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language): an exam required of students whose native language is not English. It is used by colleges to measure a student's English proficiency.

Transfer students: students who have attended another college for any period, from a single term to three years. Transfer students may receive credit for some or all of the courses they have successfully completed before the transfer.

Trimester: an academic calendar period of about 15 weeks. Three trimesters make up an academic year. Students make normal progress by attending two of the trimesters each year.

Transcript: the official record of high school or college courses and grades, generally required as part of the college application.

Tuition: money that is paid for instruction in a private school, college, or university.

Undergraduate: college student who has not yet received a Bachelor's Degree.

Wait list: term used by colleges to describe a process in which they may initially delay offering or denying admission, but rather extend the possibility of admission in the future.

Work Study: a federally funded program that makes part-time jobs available to students with demonstrated financial need