



DARIEN HIGH SCHOOL

**COLLEGE PLANNING GUIDE FOR JUNIORS
CLASS OF 2021**

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COLLEGE COUNSELING AT DARIEN HIGH SCHOOL

This Planning Guide is provided to help students and their parents with post-secondary exploration. Your school counselor will help clarify and supplement this information, and will be available to meet with you to help formulate personal plans. We acknowledge that college is not the planned next-step for all Darien High School students; nevertheless, we encourage all students to complete the process during their senior year.

The process kicks off with a special evening meeting for juniors and their parents. The program, usually scheduled in the fall, addresses all aspects of the college application process at Darien High School, including an overview of DHS Guidance policies and procedures for applying to college and an introduction to *Naviance*.

Beginning in the winter of their junior year, each student will schedule an individual family conference with their school counselor to go through the college process. These conferences will last about one class period. The conference will include the following:

- *Transcript and graduation requirements review*
- *Standardized testing options*
- *A review of all test options and results*
- *Discussion of the “Parent Packet” and “Junior Packet” responses*
- *Game plan for identifying and visiting colleges*

In order to have a productive meeting, we ask each student to complete the “Junior Packet” and each parent to complete the “Parent Packet.” These forms should be returned to the student’s counselor no less than 5 school days prior to the scheduled meeting. The forms will be available through the DHS website.

Once the forms have been completed and submitted, students are asked to come to the counseling office to schedule the Junior College Conference during their free period. Parents are asked to attend these conferences. Although there is only one formal family meeting, students should feel free to schedule less formal meetings with their counselor at any time.

CALENDAR FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

JUNIOR YEAR

SEPTEMBER

- Register for PSAT/NMSQT
- Search for dates and locations of college fairs (Greenwich, Wilton)
- Start the school year focused and ready
- Look into joining a club at school if you aren't involved already

OCTOBER

- Take PSAT
- Check for local college fairs and evening information programs
- Meet with college representatives during free periods in the CCC
- Register for winter SAT/ACT and/or SAT Subject Tests
 - Research prep options for standardized tests (Khan Academy and ACT Academy are free online test prep options for the SAT and ACT)
- Check registration deadlines for AP tests taken in May

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

- Attend evening college planning night (for students and parents) hosted by the Counseling Department
- Begin researching colleges
- Review PSAT results

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

- Register for spring SAT/ACT and/or SAT Subject Tests
- Attend Junior Seminar throughout Quarter 3
- Make appointment for joint parent/student meeting with school counselor (*junior packet and parent packet should be submitted 5 school days prior to scheduled meeting*)
- Access Naviance through the DHS website
 - Develop initial college list in "Colleges I'm Thinking About" in Naviance
- Research interesting and challenging summer courses, jobs, or activities
- Use vacation time to visit college campuses
- Plan senior year courses — individual meeting with counselor

MARCH/APRIL

- Plan to visit a variety of college campuses (use this time to determine which type of school is most appealing to you)
- Take required CT SAT School Day at DHS
- Consider taking SAT Subject Tests in courses you are finishing this year (check individual college requirements)
- Consider taking the ACT
- Attend DHS College Fair or local area college fairs
- Identify teachers whom you may ask for recommendations

MAY

- Take the AP exams, SAT/ACT, and/or SAT Subject Tests
- Ask teachers for recommendation letters

JUNE

- Take SAT/ACT and/or SAT Subject Tests
- Touch base with your school counselor before you leave if you will have any college applications due during the summer

SUMMER

- Visit Colleges
- Participate in employment, a summer course/program, and/or other activities
- Continue extracurricular and community service activities
- Register for any August, September, or October ACT/SAT
 - Review for any SAT/ACT Tests being taken in Fall of Senior Year
- Consider essay topics/write rough draft of college essay
- Continue working on/complete a resume
- Continue working on/complete Common Application
- Have fun and enjoy the time off

CALENDAR FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

SENIOR YEAR

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

- Attend Senior Seminar throughout Quarter 1
- Register early for the October or November SAT/ACT and/or SAT Subject Tests (if applicable)
- Make certain all graduation requirements will be met
- Meet with your counselor to give an update on where you are in the process
- Work on finalizing college list and make sure it is in Naviance (“Colleges I’m Thinking About”)
- Consider deadlines for Early Decision or Early Action applications
- Look online for application materials
- Request/confirm teachers for recommendation letters through Naviance
- Continue working on/complete application essay(s) (including supplements!)
- Continue to visit colleges
- Check Naviance for college representative visits in the CCC at DHS
- Consider interviewing with college representatives (at colleges or with local alumni)

OCTOBER

- Take SAT/ACT and/or SAT Subject Tests (if applicable)
- Work on applications/essays
 - Review with counselor, parent, or teacher
 - Pay attention to availability of merit scholarships and/or honors programs (particularly at large universities)
- Begin financial aid forms (open on October 1): FAFSA (and CSS profile and/or other college-specific forms if applicable)
- Continue to check Naviance for college representative visits in the CCC at DHS
- Request College Board or ACT to send official test scores to all colleges to which you will apply that require test scores (see collegeboard.org or act.org) - *can take 2-3 weeks for scores to arrive at school
- Submit Transcript Request Form – ***Due 30 days before 1st deadline***

NOVEMBER

- Deadlines for most Early Decision I or Early Action college applications and financial aid forms, including FAFSA and CSS Profile (if applicable)
- Submit Transcript Request Form - ***Due 30 days before 1st deadline***
- Request College Board or ACT to send official test scores to all colleges to which you will apply that require test scores (see collegeboard.org or act.org) - *can take 2-3 weeks for scores to arrive at school
- Consider emailing Q1 grades to colleges (some schools now require students to submit Q1 grades as part of the application process)

DECEMBER

- Take SAT/ACT and/or SAT Subject Tests (if applicable)
- Attend evening Financial Aid presentation
 - Begin researching private scholarships (Naviance, fastweb.com, etc.)

- Continue working on applications/essays for Regular Decision deadlines—review with counselor, parent or teacher
- College decisions for Early Action/Early Decision I begin to arrive - notify your counselor of college admissions decisions as you hear back from schools
 - NOTE: If you were accepted to a college Early Decision I, **make sure to withdraw** your applications from any other schools
- Be aware of application deadlines
- Continue to visit college campuses
- Begin thinking about your Senior Internship

JANUARY

- Deadlines for submitting most Regular Decision and Early Decision II college applications and financial aid forms, including FAFSA and CSS Profile (if applicable)
- Semester grades are automatically sent to the colleges to which you have previously submitted a transcript request form for

FEBRUARY

- Research and apply for scholarships (fastweb.com, Naviance, etc.)
- Submit final financial aid forms to colleges (FAFSA, CSS Profile, etc.)
- Finalize plans for senior internship

MARCH

- College decisions begin to arrive - notify your counselor of college admissions decisions as you hear back from schools
- Continue to explore colleges as thoroughly as possible to determine which school you'd ultimately like to attend
- Be aware of the deadline to apply for local scholarships through DHS
- Continue to work hard in your classes - second semester grades still matter!

APRIL

- Attend Open House programs for accepted students, if possible
- Review your college responses and financial aid offers
 - Make final decision—Send deposit to one school by May 1!

MAY

- Students should reply to their offers of admission by submitting the required tuition deposit by MAY 1st. *****STUDENTS MAY NOT SUBMIT A DEPOSIT TO MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL.*****
 - Decline offers at all other colleges (unless you are choosing to remain on a college's waitlist)
- AP Exams
- Senior Internship
- Notify your counselor of college admissions decisions
- Complete the After DHS Form

JUNE

- GRADUATION!
- Final transcript will be sent to your choice of college

SELF-EVALUATION

Before a student begins their college search process, it is important for them to evaluate themselves. Students should reflect on what is important to them for a college campus experience. In many cases, students will not be able to offer clear answers to these questions until they actually visit college campuses. They also need to honestly evaluate their transcript and other academic performances to help determine how competitive of a school they should seek.

Campus Considerations

- What size student body would I feel comfortable with?
- How far away from home do I feel comfortable living?
- Is the campus location too hot or cold?
- Do I want to be in a city, and if not, how far away from a city?
- How easy is it to get to campus?
- Does the campus have the extracurricular activities I am looking for?
- Is cost a factor, and if so, what are the limits?
- Do I need to work while in college?
- What type of student body make-up is important to me?
- Does the ranking of the school matter?
- What type of entertainment do I want from my college campus?

Academic Considerations

- What are my favorite subjects?
- What do I think I want to major in?
- How much interaction do I need to have with my instructors?
- Do my grades reflect my abilities?
- Do my test scores reflect my abilities?
- How do I best study?
- How much academic challenge do I want?
- What do I hope to get out of my college experience?
- How well do I manage my time?
- Do I want to go to college right away? Am I ready?

TYPES OF ADMISSIONS APPLICATIONS

There are four primary types of admissions applications. Some require a commitment from the student and others do not. Deadlines vary depending on the college and the application process; each is outlined below. In general, with the exception of Early Decision, students are notified no later than April 1 and will have until May 1 to accept a college's offer of admission.

A. Regular Decision

Under Regular Decision, the university sets an application deadline (typically between January 1 and March 15), and replies to all applicants at the same time, roughly the middle of March. The applicant pool in Regular Decision tends to be larger.

B. Rolling Admissions

Under Rolling Admissions, the university admissions office makes decisions on applications as they are submitted and notifies students of their decisions on a “rolling” basis. Students may apply as early as September, and may hear within one month of submitting the application.

C. Early Action

When a student applies through an Early Action (EA) process, the student must submit the application for a specified early deadline (usually between October 15 and December 15). This allows students the opportunity to know earlier, and to decide whether they want to submit more applications under Regular Decision plans. Some colleges may offer Early Action 2 with a later deadline.

Some universities subscribe to a Restrictive Early Action. Students applying under this type of plan follow the same procedure, but are subject to restrictions imposed by the university. Check each school's requirements carefully.

D. Early Decision

The most restrictive process is called Early Decision (ED). Under ED, students make a commitment to the university to which they apply that they will attend if accepted. The deadline is typically November 1 or 15, usually followed by a decision in mid-December. Students may not apply to more than one university under ED. Applications to other schools under Regular, Rolling, or EA might be restricted in some cases. Students need to check with their ED school so they do not violate any of their conditions. Early Decision applications require a contract to be signed by the student, a parent, and the school counselor to ensure all parties understand their obligations. A number of colleges have created nuances to the ED process, including Early Decision 2, which is also binding, but may have a later deadline.

THE APPLICATION

By the fall of senior year students should have completed most of their research, and narrowed their list to 5-10 colleges. Students should have taken the ACT or SAT in the spring of junior year, or registered for the ACT or SAT for the fall of senior year. Now it is time to begin submitting applications.

There are many pieces that make up a completed college application. It may seem overwhelming to consider them all at once. Below is an explanation of each component of the application, and its role in the process.

1. The Application

How students apply to a college depends on the specific colleges to which they are applying. Schools may accept the Common Application, Coalition Application, and/or a school-specific application. The majority of colleges will accept the Common Application (commonapp.org). If a college is not listed on the Common Application, students should check that college's website for information about how to apply. If a college offers more than one option for applying, it does not matter which application a student chooses to complete, as colleges will consider all of them equally.

If students choose to use the Common Application, they need to fill it out only once, and submit it for each college. Some schools will also have a supplemental portion to the Common App. Follow all instructions completely. This will be the first impression students make on the application reader.

The Coalition is another online college application that may be used by select schools. For more information please visit www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org.

Students must be aware of (and honor) application deadlines. Applications can be submitted ahead of deadlines. Students should make sure they have the correct school name and location and have completed and paid for (if applicable) all applications on their list.

NOTE: Keep a copy of all documents related to your applications.

2. The Transcript

The academic transcript is the most important piece of information in the college application packet. In addition to viewing a student's cumulative GPA, schools place emphasis on the rigor of courses a student takes while in high school, as well as an increase in rigor and/or academic improvement over time. Many colleges will re-calculate a high school GPA to include only core academic classes. The rigor of senior year courses is also considered through the transcript.

Students must request a copy of their DHS transcript to be sent to each college to which they apply. These requests must be submitted to the counseling secretary a

minimum of 30 days prior to the application deadline. The school counselor will send the transcript (which includes courses and grades from grades 9 – 12) along with a school profile, secondary school report form, and the counselor recommendation.

NOTE: Many schools require students to submit Q1 grades as part of the application process. Students should consider sending Q1 grades to all the schools they applied to - it's a great opportunity to contact the college representative.

3. Test Scores

Most colleges require students to submit scores from either the ACT or SAT. Colleges do not prefer one test to the other. In addition, some of the most competitive schools require, recommend, or consider SAT Subjects Tests (or will use the ACT sub scores in its place). There are a few schools that may require the SAT/ACT writing section. It is important for students to keep track of a college's testing requirements. Also, keep in mind, that a student's test scores are just one piece of the decision making process and is not the most important factor. Many schools are now "test-optional" or "test-flexible". The website fairtest.org provides a list of these schools, but it is always good to confirm the testing policy on a specific school's website

SAT and ACT scores are NOT reported on the DHS transcript. Students must arrange for their official test scores to be sent by the College Board or the ACT, directly to each college to which they plan to apply. Students can do this when they register for the tests, or they may do so later online. There is a fee for this service, and the score reports can take 2-3 weeks to arrive at the selected colleges.

NOTE: More colleges are accepting "self-reported" scores from students and do not require official test scores from the College Board or the ACT. Please refer to college websites to determine their score reporting preferences as this may help avoid fees for score sending services.

The School CEEB Code for Darien High School is **070145**.

4. The Essay

Most colleges require one essay, though some require more than one. It is important for students to write an essay in their own voice and demonstrate their personality. Students should discuss essay ideas with a teacher or counselor and have them review it before they submit. Some schools will also require students to write more than one essay, such as a supplement or short answer response. Students must know each college's requirements and they must submit their pieces of writing to the college with their application.

5. Letters of Recommendation

College applications may require anywhere from 0 to 2 recommendations, in addition to the recommendation that a student's counselor will write. Students should choose teachers of different subjects who have taught them recently

(between grades 10 – 12) and who know them well as a student. Students should speak with their teachers well in advance of the application deadlines (teachers do have the option of saying “no”). Some teachers may ask students to fill out a questionnaire and/or share a resume before writing a recommendation. At the beginning of senior year, students will then send a request to their chosen teachers through Naviance and the teachers will upload and submit their letters to the students’ colleges through the Naviance website.

Students should be courteous in this process and give the teachers as much advance notice as possible (we recommend students ask teachers at the end of their junior year). This will allow them time to write a thoughtful and thorough recommendation. It is also expected that students will inform their recommending teachers of the results of their applications. A thank you note is a nice touch as well. Try to avoid submitting too many letters of recommendation. Some colleges will only read the number of letters that they require.

6. Activity Record

While colleges are primarily interested in a student’s academic record, they are also interested in leadership qualities, interests, abilities and talents. Colleges would rather see sustained interest in activities than many different ones. Students’ commitment to their activities is what matters most to schools. Students can create a resume to organize their activities and should also complete this particular section in their college applications. Students should offer enough of a description of a particular activity and not assume the person reading the application knows what each activity name means.

7. The Interview

About 200 colleges visit Darien High School each fall. It is in the best interest of students to attend these meetings when a college on their prospective list is visiting. A list of upcoming visits is available through Naviance.

Students can also request an interview on campus or through a local alumni interviewer. In either case, the notes from the interview will become part of a student’s application file. The school counselors can help students before interviews by providing students with sample questions or even conducting a mock interview.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Standardized tests are one important factor in the admissions processes of most colleges and universities. Over the past few years, a growing number of colleges have begun to place less emphasis on these test scores, or eliminated them as a requirement altogether (for a list of colleges no longer requiring standardized tests, visit www.fairtest.org). At most colleges, however, testing still plays a role in the admissions process.

BE ADVISED: Students should register for ACTs and SATs long before the deadline. Students registering close to the registration deadline often find themselves taking the test at a school other than DHS. Darien High School does not have any control over test center assignments. College Board has recently instituted new rules that apply to the administration of the test. No walk-ins are allowed, and picture IDs are required. Students should check the College Board website thoroughly for the new procedures before taking the test.

SAT Reasoning Test

Students typically take the SAT in the spring of their junior year and the fall of their senior year. How many times a given student takes the test depends on each individual's level of satisfaction with their scores. Score reports are sent directly from the College Board to colleges and universities at the request of the student. Students can choose which test date's scores they want sent from the College Board; however, most colleges will consider the student's best individual sub-scores (EBRW, Mathematics, and Writing), even if they are from different test administration dates. This practice is known as Super Scoring. Please note that Darien High School does not report standardized test scores on the transcript.

In March of 2016, the College Board changed the format for the SAT Reasoning Test. Students are now assessed in two areas, Evidence-Based Reading/Writing and Math, with an optional Writing section. The new test has more of an emphasis on reading, including in the Math section. The timing of the test changed and includes longer sections and fewer answer choices. For additional information about the new SAT please refer to: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat?navId=gh-nsat>.

SAT Subject Tests

Subject Tests (formerly SAT II: Subject Tests) are designed to measure a student's knowledge and skills in particular subject areas, as well as a student's ability to apply that knowledge. Students take the Subject Tests to demonstrate to colleges their mastery of specific subjects like English, history, mathematics, science, and foreign language. The tests are independent of any particular textbook or method of instruction. The tests' content evolves to reflect current trends in high school curricula, but the types of questions change little from year to year. Some highly selective colleges require, recommend, or consider the Subject Tests for admission and others use it for course placement after students have been admitted. Some colleges specify the Subject Tests

they require for admission or placement; others allow applicants to choose which tests to take.

Most students take Subject Tests toward the end of their junior year or at the beginning of their senior year. Some of the Subject Tests can be taken in the early high school years. For example, a student who is performing well in Honors Biology could, under the advice of their teacher, take the Biology Subject Test at the end of freshman year. Students should check with their Biology teacher for advice. As with SATs, Subject Test score reports should be sent directly from the College Board to colleges and universities at the request of the student.

ACT

The ACT is an alternative to the SAT and is universally accepted for college admission. The ACT is curriculum-based, so questions on the ACT are directly related to what students have learned in high school courses in English, mathematics, reading, and science. There is also an optional writing subtest that includes an essay. Not all colleges require the writing test, so students should check specific admissions requirements for each of their schools. Darien High School is a test center for the ACT on certain test dates.

Some schools will SuperScore both the ACT and SAT. It is the student's responsibility to send scores to the colleges to which they apply. An increasing number of colleges are accepting self-reported scores. DHS does not report ACT or SAT scores on the transcript. Many colleges are accepting ACT scores in place of SAT Subject Tests. Students should check with individual colleges for requirements. For additional information about the ACT, please refer to: www.act.org

Preparing for Admission Tests

There are a variety of ways for students to practice and prepare for the ACT or SAT. Some students will register for courses, pursue options online, or hire a tutor. No one way is best for everyone; this is an individual decision for each student. Since the SAT Subject Tests are curriculum-based, students should take these tests after reviewing for a final exam in the particular subject area. More specific information, including practice questions and Subject Test study guides are available at www.collegeboard.org or www.act.org.

Test Dates and Registration Deadlines

For information on all future testing dates and registration deadlines for the SAT and/or ACT, please visit www.collegeboard.org for the SAT and SAT Subject Tests, and www.act.org for the ACT. (NOTE: It is best to register as early as possible in an effort to secure your first-choice testing site.)

Standardized Test Formats

	Current SAT	ACT
Timing	3 hours, 50 minutes 50 minute essay (optional)	3 hours, 35 minutes 40 minute essay (optional)
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 long sections ▪ Questions have 4 answer choices ▪ 154 questions ▪ 1 minute, 10 seconds per questions ▪ 3 hours, 50 minutes (include essay) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 long sections ▪ Most questions have 4 answer choices ▪ Math = 5 answer choices ▪ 215 questions ▪ 49 seconds per question ▪ 3 hours, 35 minutes (includes essay)
Subjects	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (essay separate), Math	English (essay separate), Math, Reading, Science
Scoring	Combined score: 400-1600 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 sections scored separately ▪ Essay scored separately ▪ No deduction for incorrect answers 	Composite score: 1-36 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 sections are averaged ▪ Optional essay scored separately and does not affect composite score ▪ No deduction for incorrect answers
English / Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise and edit a passage of writing according to Standard English grammar and punctuation, effective rhetoric and logical structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise and edit a passage of writing according to Standard English grammar and punctuation, effective rhetoric and logical structure.
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pre-Algebra through basic Trigonometry ▪ Less emphasis on Geometry ▪ Strong emphasis on Algebra ▪ Calculator prohibited on one section ▪ 12 Grid-in questions (no answer choices) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pre-Algebra through basic Trigonometry ▪ Formulas not provided ▪ Emphasis on word problems ▪ No open ended questions ▪ Calculator for all sections
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vocabulary de-emphasized ▪ Evidence based questions, no sentence completions ▪ 4 single passages and 1 paired passage ▪ 2 passages w/ diagrams and charts ▪ 2 vocabulary-in-context questions per passage ▪ 2 evidence questions per passage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vocabulary de-emphasized ▪ Fact based questions, less inference and interpretation ▪ 4 single or paired passages ▪ Straight forward questions requiring close reading of passage ▪ Consistent order of subject areas
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No stand-alone science section. ▪ 21 science related questions will be included in other sections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 40 questions over 6 or 7 passages ▪ Interpreting graphs, charts and diagrams ▪ Looking for a structured response
Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 50 minute optional essay ▪ Analyze a passage and evaluate author's reasoning and rhetoric ▪ Student opinions are not encouraged ▪ Always the last test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 40 minute optional essay ▪ Analyze multiple viewpoints on a contemporary issue ▪ Optional but required by some colleges
Misc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No penalty for guessing ▪ Practice questions available online ▪ Practice tests on Khan Academy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No penalty for guessing ▪ Practice questions available online

Table A1: SAT Total to ACT Composite.

SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT
1600	36	1250	26	910	16
*1590	36	*1240	26	900	16
1580	36	1230	26	*890	16
1570	36	1220	25	880	16
1560	35	*1210	25	870	15
1550	35	1200	25	860	15
*1540	35	1190	24	*850	15
1530	35	*1180	24	840	15
1520	34	1170	24	830	15
1510	34	1160	24	820	14
*1500	34	1150	23	810	14
1490	34	*1140	23	*800	14
1480	33	1130	23	790	14
1470	33	1120	22	780	14
*1460	33	*1110	22	770	13
1450	33	1100	22	*760	13
1440	32	1090	21	750	13
*1430	32	*1080	21	740	13
1420	32	1070	21	730	13
1410	31	1060	21	720	12
*1400	31	1050	20	*710	12
1390	31	*1040	20	700	12
1380	30	1030	20	690	12
*1370	30	1020	19	680	11
1360	30	*1010	19	*670	11
1350	29	1000	19	660	11
*1340	29	990	19	650	11
1330	29	980	18	640	10
1320	28	*970	18	*630	10
*1310	28	960	18	620	10
1300	28	950	17	610	9
1290	27	940	17	600	9
*1280	27	*930	17	*590	9
1270	27	920	17		
1260	27				

*Use this SAT score when a single score point comparison is needed.

Note: Concordance tables for the ACT Composite were derived from concordances of the ACT sum score.

Table A2 : ACT Composite to SAT Total.

ACT	SAT	SAT Range
36	1590	1570-1600
35	1540	1530-1560
34	1500	1490-1520
33	1460	1450-1480
32	1430	1420-1440
31	1400	1390-1410
30	1370	1360-1380
29	1340	1330-1350
28	1310	1300-1320
27	1280	1260-1290
26	1240	1230-1250
25	1210	1200-1220
24	1180	1160-1190
23	1140	1130-1150
22	1110	1100-1120
21	1080	1060-1090
20	1040	1030-1050
19	1010	990-1020
18	970	960-980
17	930	920-950
16	890	880-910
15	850	830-870
14	800	780-820
13	760	730-770
12	710	690-720
11	670	650-680
10	630	620-640
9	590	590-610



For more information please visit: [College Board Concordance Tables](#)

Testing with Accommodations

Students who receive accommodations for testing in classes at Darien High School, either through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or through a Section 504 Plan (504), may be eligible for accommodations on the ACT or College Board Tests (including PSAT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests, or AP). Students who believe they may qualify for an accommodation should contact their school counselor for more information. Requests for accommodations must be submitted, along with documentation from a student's IEP or 504 directly to College Board or ACT by the Director of Guidance. Each test organization has strict rules for submitting documentation that identifies a student's diagnosed disability and the impact that it has on a student's ability to perform on standardized tests. Both testing organizations have websites regarding their particular policies.

College Board: <http://student.collegeboard.org/services-for-students-with-disabilities>

ACT: <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/disab/>

The College Board's process requires students to request accommodations a minimum of eight weeks prior to testing. However, students may request an accommodation as early as their freshman year. If approved, students may use the accommodation(s) for any and all College Board tests as long as they are students at Darien High School and documentation of the disability is current (usually no more than five years old).

The ACT process prefers students to register for testing and then request accommodations. A request for accommodations and registration ticket needs to be submitted at least eight weeks prior to the test day.

NOTE: A student who has been approved for accommodations from one testing company will not necessarily be approved by the other.

Advanced Placement Exams (APs)

The Advanced Placement program is administered by the College Board. The program consists of courses, taught as part of the DHS curriculum, and culminating with national exams administered in May. Although the exams were not designed for use in the college admissions process, they can be used to demonstrate student proficiency and achievement in a particular subject. It is also possible for students to earn college credit or advanced standing in college subjects.

AP exams are administered at DHS each May, according to the two-week national schedule created by the College Board. Students who take an AP exam are excused from classes on the day of the exam. Most AP exams at DHS are taken by juniors and seniors. Students enrolled in AP courses are expected to sit for the exam in that subject, but it is also possible for students to sit for AP exams in subjects that they have not taken, or in a subject not offered at DHS.

Students taking AP courses will find that most teachers provide review sessions prior to the exams. These review sessions often are scheduled outside of the regular school day, in the evenings and on the weekends. It is the student's responsibility to have their AP scores sent to colleges. This can be done when they take the test or afterwards online.

General Testing Advice

STANDARDIZED TESTING ADVICE FOR FRESHMEN

- Freshmen in Honors Biology can discuss the merits of sitting for a Biology Subject Test with their respective teachers or counselor.
- Others who *might consider* testing include those who are fluent in a world language, and those who are advanced in mathematics (having completed Geometry and Algebra II by the end of freshman year). These students should consider taking the Subject Test in world language, or in Math Level I in June of their Freshman year.

STANDARDIZED TESTING ADVICE FOR SOPHOMORES

- All sophomores have the option to sit for the PSAT in the fall. Registration is through the high school. Sophomores should be aware that this is truly a practice test—scores from the PSAT in grade 10 are not reported to colleges, or even to the National Merit Corporation.
- Some sophomores will be prepared to take one or more Subject Tests in June. Sophomores sometimes take a world language, or the Math Level I/II test.

STANDARDIZED TESTING ADVICE FOR JUNIORS

- All juniors have the option to take the PSAT in October. The PSAT is a practice test, so results are not reported to colleges, and they are not reported on the transcript. Students who earn high scores on the PSAT will be considered for National Merit Scholarship recognition.
- All juniors will be required to take the Connecticut SAT School Day in the spring of their junior year for the State of Connecticut. This test will be given during the school day. There is no cost and students do not need to register for this test. This school-day SAT is a usable score for colleges, however it does not include the optional essay portion. If a student wishes to cancel the test after taking it, they can complete a request to cancel scores form that day and their scores will not appear in their College Board accounts.
- In addition to the Connecticut state-required SAT, students should consider taking the ACT or SAT during the spring of junior year. Each student should plan ahead to determine which date suits him/her best. Some students may choose to take the ACT or SAT twice in the spring. Students must register for the ACT or SAT themselves on each organization's website.
- Some juniors will take SAT Subject Tests in June. It is possible to take up to three (one hour long) Subject Tests on a single day. Some colleges will accept ACT scores in lieu of Subject Tests. Students should check with individual colleges to determine how many (if any) Subject Tests are required. Students should also check with their subject area teachers and school counselor for further advice on which tests to take.
- Students enrolled in AP courses should plan to take the corresponding AP exams in May. Typical AP courses for juniors include US History, Chemistry, Spanish, French, Calculus and Statistics. AP exams are also available in other subjects. They are not required for college admissions, and are usually used for placement once students have been admitted to college.

STANDARDIZED TESTING ADVICE FOR SENIORS

- Some seniors will retake the ACT or SAT in the fall. Scores from the August, September and/or October administrations will be available in time for colleges to review for most Early Decision or Early Action deadlines. Scores from the November and December administrations may also be available for early deadlines depending on the school (check the individual colleges to confirm).
- Seniors may take or retake SAT Subject Tests in the fall. Counselors are available to discuss with each student which additional tests to take.

THE CAMPUS VISIT

Visiting college campuses, though time consuming, is one of the most valuable experiences in helping students to evaluate a university. Through a visit, students will learn more about the college they are considering. Remember, whatever college a student chooses will be their home for the next four years, so be sure to do your research. Campus visits provide “real life” experiences students cannot get from reading a brochure or surfing a website.

BEFORE VISITING

- Do your research.
- Review mail received from the college you are visiting.
- Check out the college’s website.
- Speak with a current student or alumni.
- Create a list of questions that you need answered.

YOUR TRIP

- If you are visiting more than one college per day, schedule wisely.
- Make appointments through the Admission Office so your visit will be noted.
- Meet with a student tour guide who can walk you around campus and tell you about their experience.
- Take notes and pictures to remember what you liked about the campus.
- Talk with professors or coaches on campus and try to sit in on a class.
- Always follow up conversations with a thank you note.

MAKE THE MOST OF IT

- Make your connections count on campus by collecting business cards or writing down names of the people you meet.
- Meet the admission counselor who will visit Darien in the fall, or the person who will review the applications from DHS.
- Get email addresses of students you meet for future questions.
- Pick up a copy of the student newspaper to learn what is happening on campus.
- Do not be afraid to speak to students on campus.

ENJOY!

- Follow up visits with thank you letters or emails to the people that were helpful.
- Email your admissions counselor expressing your gratitude and continued interest.
- Make sure your visits are when classes are in session so that you can experience the college as it would be in the fall or spring semesters.
- Speak with your counselor about your college visit experiences.

The following are possible questions to ask an admissions counselor or tour guide while visiting a college campus. It is important to prepare questions and think about the information you want to gather ahead of your visit.

QUESTIONS FOR THE ADMISSIONS COUNSELOR:

- What type of student is happiest here?
- What do kids do on the weekends?
- What do you look for in an applicant?
- What do students do after graduation?
- Do you have a placement office to assist in internships/jobs?
- What is the most important criteria when looking at a student application?
- Who makes the decision about my application?
- When do I have to choose a major?
- Is there an opportunity to study abroad?
- What can I do if I need help in my classes?

QUESTIONS FOR THE TOUR GUIDE:

- What is your major and how did you choose it?
- What do kids do on the weekends?
- Do you always get the classes you want?
- How big are your classes?
- How competitive are students once they are on campus?
- Do most people socialize on campus or off?
- Why did you choose to come here? Where else did you apply?
- What is the biggest downside to attending here?
- Where is the best place to live on campus?
- How is the food on campus?
- How much influence does Greek life have on campus?
- Where do students come from?

THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

Colleges go about the process of interviewing students in many different ways. Some colleges no longer offer interviews, as they cannot possibly interview all of the students who request the opportunity to do so. Others may conduct interviews through alumni in the local area. Admissions Counselors may interview students on or off-campus, and on-campus interviewers may be employees or current students at the university. Regardless, the questions will be somewhat similar. Students should bring a copy of their resume and/or transcript to help create conversation. It is important for students to be themselves, relaxed, and comfortable, but to always show the interviewer that they are serious about the process and highly interested in the school.

Tips for Interviewing

- Be on time
- Remember the name of the interviewer and their contact information
- Relax and be yourself, the interviewer is not trying to “catch you”
- Dress like yourself, but make sure it is not sloppy or inappropriate
- Be positive, even when describing a negative experience
- Show your knowledge of the college
- It is ok to admit your own flaws, but focus on your strengths
- Be honest
- Prepare a list of questions for the interviewer ahead of time
- Make eye contact
- No gum or candy
- Follow up with a thank you note

Possible Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Who is your favorite musical artist?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What is your most significant achievement?
- What made you decide to apply to our school?
- What do you think you will contribute to student life?
- What are the last three books you read?
- What would you change about your high school?
- How will you transition your extracurricular endeavors to college?
- If you could have dinner with anyone, who would it be?
- Where do you see yourself after college?
- What’s your favorite T.V. show?
- What is one thing you wish you did while in high school?
- How do you think you can strengthen our college community?
- What goals do you have for yourself?
- What is your favorite subject?
- What are you considering majoring in?

THE COLLEGE ESSAY

The essays on the college application are very important items because they give students the opportunity to convey the things that are most important to them to the college admission staff. A student's essay should be unique, but should also not be written in a way that could be interpreted negatively. The essay should be well written and can be used as an opportunity to take a "normal" event and describe it from a different perspective. It also gives students an opportunity to help explain who they really are as a student and any possible blemishes on their academic record. Students are encouraged to have a teacher and their school counselor review their essays to offer suggestions.

Do

- Plan ahead and read the prompts carefully
- Be honest
- Stay positive, even when describing something that is negative
- Write about something you are passionate or knowledgeable about
- Have someone review your essay

Don't

- Plagiarize
- Submit after one draft
- Be shy
- Have someone "over edit"
- Be redundant

2019-2020* Common Application Essay Prompts

**Please refer to the Common Application website for the most up to date essay prompts.*

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Throughout high school students may have received services through an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or accommodations through a Section 504 Plan. The protections, accommodations, and services that a student received in high school may not be available to them in college. Each college has a process for students to request support, which usually includes submitting documentation to substantiate the need for the help. In addition, some supports may require an additional fee that the family would need to pay. Depending on the types of support a student will need in college, the student may decide to disclose the nature of his/her disability before receiving an admissions decision or afterwards. Families should consult with their school counselor before deciding when to disclose their disability to a college and which supports to request.

Sample of services available to students:

- Extended time
- Exams in an alternate setting
- Orals exams (or other alternate test formats)
- Note taking services
- Books on tape
- Spell checkers
- Reduced course load
- Writing labs
- Emotional support groups
- Use of recorder in lecture
- Large print handouts

Questions to ask a college about services:

- What documentation is needed to request accommodations at your school?
- Are the admission criteria different?
- What are some typical supports that students at your school receive?
- Are separate assessments required for class placement?
- Is there an additional fee for supports?
- Is there someone that helps monitor student progress or helps to implement the accommodations?
- How many students receive supports?
- Is tutoring available for students?
- How available are counselors to students for emotional support?
- What types of supports are in place for internship/job placement?

SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

Specialized majors and programs (Art, Athletics, Music, Theater, and Service Academies) may require portfolios, auditions, or other specific steps in the process. Submission of these items will have different deadlines; check each school carefully. If students have a special talent, they should pursue that interest with each college. This is not the time to be modest. If the admissions community doesn't know about a student's talent, they can't possibly react to it.

STUDENT ATHLETES

The process of becoming a recruited college student-athlete is complicated. It takes a great deal of time and organization. Remember, athletics can be a significant enhancement to your application. Recruited athletes, though not guaranteed admission, have an extra variable in their favor in the application process. The same characteristics that have made a student an athletic success can lead to success in the recruitment process: Be aggressive, plan well, be organized.

Keep in mind that in the application process, students are students first and athletes after that.

- Students should first and foremost follow the regular application process for all students. They should not rely on coaches to “fast-track” their application, nor can they count on coaches to submit their application.
- Athletics will assist students in the process only AFTER they have applied.

There are different divisions, and different conferences at play in this process.

- NCAA Division I
- NCAA Division II
- NCAA Division III (non-scholarship)
- Ivy League
- New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC)

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) serves as a regulator of college athletics. There is a wealth of information available at www.ncaa.org, including:

- Which colleges sponsor which sports
- Eligibility rules
- Recruiting rules

Student-athletes interested in playing for a Division 1 or 2 college are required to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center to determine their college eligibility. Students are encouraged to register online in the early part of their sophomore year at <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>. After registering, the student will be assigned a 10-digit ID number. Contact the guidance secretary for a transcript release form so that we may forward your transcript to NCAA for review. See your counselor if you have any questions.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is financial assistance for students enrolled in eligible programs at participating schools to cover school expenses, including tuition, fees, room, board, books, supplies, and transportation. Aid typically comes from three sources: the state, the federal government, and the college.

The three most common types of Federal aid (government sponsored programs) are grants, loans, and work-study. Much of federal aid is based on the financial need of the family.

Grants are a type of financial aid that does not have to be repaid. Generally, the grant amount is based on need, cost of attendance, and enrollment status.

Loans are borrowed money that must be repaid with interest. Maximum loan amounts depend on the student's year in school. Parents may also borrow to pay education expenses for dependent undergraduate students up to their cost of attendance minus other estimated financial assistance.

Work-Study allows students to earn money while enrolled in school to help pay for education expenses.

FAFSA

In order to qualify for financial aid, students and parents must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is available at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>. For more information regarding FAFSA and its deadlines, please refer to: <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/fafsa-deadlines>.

CSS Profile

Some colleges require more information than is collected on the FAFSA. Many of these colleges will require students to complete the College Board's financial aid form, the CSS Profile (<https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>) in addition to the FAFSA. There is a fee (per college) to submit the CSS Profile.

Students and families can begin filling out both the FAFSA and CSS Profile beginning October 1st of a student's senior year. Most colleges are now requiring these forms to be submitted around the same time as a student's college application deadline.

College-Specific Scholarships

In addition to federal aid, students may qualify for aid from individual colleges and universities. In addition to loans and work study, colleges also offer aid in the form of Grants (described above) and Scholarships. Scholarships are similar to grants in that they are “free money”—you are not required to repay them. Scholarships are granted not on

the basis of financial need, but rather based on achievement or merit. Students can research any college-specific scholarships on a college's website.

Other Scholarship Opportunities

- Darien Community Scholarships - In February/March of senior year, students will have the opportunity to fill out an application to be considered for the various scholarships offered by organizations within the Darien community.
- Outside Scholarships - Students are encouraged to research other, outside scholarship opportunities on Naviance and other scholarship search engines, such as fastweb.com. (NOTE: Students should never have to pay a fee to apply for a scholarship.)

DHS POLICIES

1. *The Junior Packet*

The Junior Packet must be completed prior to any college conferences or processing of college applications. The packet (including both student and parent segments) must be turned in at least 5 school days prior to the date of the scheduled junior college conference. The packet is an opportunity for students to reflect on themselves, their years at DHS and to think about what criteria is important to them in the college exploration process.

2. *Letter of Recommendation*

School Counselors write letters of recommendation for each senior with whom they work. Letters are written based on the counselor's knowledge of the student, the student's academic records, and the Junior Packet. These letters are not released to students or parents; they are a confidential communication between Darien High School and the colleges. In addition, students may choose to ask one or more teachers to write a letter of recommendation. Each teacher has their own criteria to write letters for students. It is important for students to approach teachers early (end of junior year) and to update them on their progress.

3. *Test Scores*

Darien High School does not report standardized test scores from ACT, AP, SAT, or SAT Subject Tests on the student's official transcript. It is the student's responsibility to have official scores sent to each college or scholarship organization directly from the testing organization. It is important for students to know exactly which test scores they are sending to colleges and to double check the policies for the schools to which they are applying.

4. *College Notifications*

Please be advised that the DHS Counseling Department does not hear from each college regarding its admissions decisions. In order to have a clear picture of the year's college results, we rely on students to inform us of each college's decision. The Counseling Department will distribute the After DHS Survey in early May to gather this information. At the conclusion of your application process, please stop by the Counseling Department to inform your counselor of the colleges' decisions in person.

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT REFERENCES

Counseling Office telephone number	203-655-3981
Counseling Office fax number	203-655-3864
DHS Code for SAT or ACT	070145
DHS Test Center Code for SAT	07180
DHS Test Center Code for ACT	234780
Counseling Website	Click this link for website

School Counselors

Ann Branca	abranca@darienps.org	ext. 2330
Meghan Emanuelson*	memanuelson@darienps.org	ext. 2306
Joan Flaherty	jflaherty@darienps.org	ext. 2241
Megan Dunn	mdunn@darienps.org	ext. 2498
Lisa Messineo	lmessineo@darienps.org	ext. 2288
Marc Power	mpower@darienps.org	ext. 2220
Kaitlin Stanton	kstanton@darienps.org	ext. 2347
Peter Trombley	ptrombley@darienps.org	ext. 2370
Deb Webb-Maloney	dwebb-maloney@darienps.org	ext. 2290

*Director of Guidance

Counseling Secretaries

Laura Hyatt	lhstatt@darienps.org	ext. 2226
Leslie Lajoie	llajoie@darienps.org	ext. 2249

DHS Counseling - Resources for Post-Secondary Planning

Testing	
www.collegeboard.org www.actstudent.org www.fairtest.org www.khanacademy.org	SAT, SAT Subject Tests, and AP testing information and registration ACT testing information and registration National Center for Fair & Open testing - list of test-optional schools Test prep for current and new SAT.
Financial Aid	
www.fafsa.ed.gov http://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile www.finaid.org	FAFSA Online – free application for federal student aid Some private schools also require students to complete this CSS Profile application. Financial Aid information page – has links to many other sites
Scholarships	
www.fastweb.com www.goingmerry.com https://student.naviance.com/darien	Free on-line scholarship matching service Free on-line scholarship matching service Scholarships will be listed under the “Colleges” tab
College Fairs	
www.nacacnet.org http://www.darienps.org	National Association for College Admission Counseling Information on local and regional college fairs under the Guidance tab/college fairs
Student Athletes	
www.eligibilitycenter.org	Information for potential college athletes on eligibility and NCAA regulations.
College Search	
https://student.naviance.com/darien www.petersons.com www.collegeview.com www.collegeconfidential.com	College and Career planning resource for DHS students/families A guide to college information On-line college search service with profiles of over 3500 colleges Fun, informative website for the college process.

www.princetonreview.com	A guide to college information
www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org	User friendly – mixes career interests with possible majors.
www.ctohe.org	Life After High School – State of CT publication
www.campustours.com	Website that allows the view to tour campuses and view webcams
www.usagapyearfairs.org	A gap-year website
www.interimprograms.com	Long running independent gap-year counseling organization

Application Process

http://connection.naviance.com/darien	Link to Family Connection in Naviance
www.commonapp.org	Complete Common Application and submit online to over 200 colleges and universities
www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org	Coalition for Access, Affordability & Success (new as of 2016)

Learning Disabilities

www.collegeautismspectrum.com	Independent organization of professionals to assist students with autism
www.insource.org	Directory of national organizations and colleges for LD and SPED
www.nclld.org	National Center for Learning Disabilities
www.ldonline.org	Website on LD and ADHD
www.ed.gov	US Department of Education

Printed Resources for All Topics

The Princeton Review's Complete Book of Colleges
Loren Pope's Colleges that Change Lives: 40 Schools You Should Know About Even If You're Not a Straight-A Student
Fiske Guide to Getting Into the Right College
Peterson's Four-Year Colleges
Barron's Profiles of American Colleges
U.S. News and World Report Best Colleges
K & W Guide to colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities
Peterson's Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities

DHS Counseling Department

Glossary of Terms for College-Bound Students and Parents

Accreditation: Recognition of a college or university by any of the regional or national accrediting bodies indicating that the institution has been judged to be meeting its objectives.

Advanced Placement Program (AP's): Culminating assessments in which students have the potential to earn college credit.

Aid Package: A combination of aid (possibly including a scholarship, grant, loan, and work) determined by a college financial aid office.

Candidate Reply Date: A policy among subscribing institutions that permits students to wait until May 1 to choose, without penalty, among offers to admission/financial aid.

Career-Oriented Programs: A group of courses that prepares students primarily for employment, often in a specific occupation. Such a program, which can last a few months or more than two years, may lead to a certificate, diploma, or an associate degree.

CEEB Code: Darien High School 070145

C.B. Code: A College Board code number that students use to designate colleges or scholarship programs they wish to receive their standardized testing score reports.

Coalition Application: New form of online college application that few schools are using at this point. Visit www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org for more information.

College Calendars:

- Traditional – two semesters
- Trimester – school calendar year divided into three equal parts
- Quarter – four equal terms of about 12 weeks each
- Other – block scheduling, 4-1-4

Common Application: Online college application accepted by numerous colleges. Students are encouraged to always print out a copy for their personal file. Visit www.commonapp.org for more information.

Consortium: A plan by which colleges within close proximity of each other share the resources of their libraries, courses, physical facilities, special cultural and occupational opportunities.

Deferred Admission: With Early Decision/Action, the admission committee can choose to place the applicant into the Regular Decision application pool.

Deferred Enrollment: The practice of allowing an accepted student to postpone enrollment for one year.

Early Action: An application process which permits students to make application to an institution preference and receive a decision during the senior year, well in advance of the normal response dates in the spring. The candidate is not committed to enroll at that particular institution.

Early Admission: Admitting students of superior ability into college courses and programs before they have completed the standard high school program.

Early Decision: An application process in which a commitment is made by the student to the institution that, if admitted, the student will enroll. Only a student who is certain of his/her first choice should apply under an Early Decision plan. The institution will require a nonrefundable deposit well before May 1.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): The application required for students to be considered for federal student financial aid.

Gap Year: A meaningful and often times educational experience that a student takes between completing high school and starting their formal college education.

GED: A series of tests that an individual who did not complete high school may take through their state education system to qualify for a high school equivalency certificate.

Grade Point Average (GPA): An indicator of the student's overall scholastic performance. The GPA is computed by totaling the number of grade points earned in each course by credit and dividing the sum by the total number of credits earned.

Grants: Awards based on financial need that do not require repayment. Grants are available through the federal government, state agencies, and educational institutions.

Honors Program: Any program offering opportunity for qualified students to enrich their educational experience through independent, advanced, or accelerated study.

Major: The subject of study in which the student chooses to specialize: a series of related courses, taken primarily in the junior and senior years.

Minor: A series of courses in a secondary field of study.

Rolling Admissions: An admission procedure by which the college considers each application as soon as all required materials have been received. The college then notifies each applicant of acceptance or rejection as soon as possible.

Scholarships: Non-repayable awards to students based on merit or merit plus need.

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

Wait List: A term used by institutions to describe a process in which they may initially delay offering or deny admission. Rather, the institution extends the possibility of admission in the future. Colleges offer admission to wait list candidates if insufficient numbers of regularly admitted candidates accept their offers of admission.