

CLASS OF 2024

**A GUIDE TO
NAVIGATING THE
HIGH SCHOOL
PROCESS**

MAC MIDDLE





Dear Eighth-Grade Students and Parents:

Welcome to your students' eighth-grade year at The Montessori Academy of Colorado! As we move into the 2023-2024 school year, we know that you are already thinking about exploring high school options as you conclude your time here at MAC. We are excited to partner with you to find the right fit for your child and family.

In this handbook, you'll find a description and timeline about the process. We hope that you will continue to communicate with us openly about your needs as we move through the various stages of preparation for this next step.

Throughout the process, do not forget your or your student's non-negotiables for a high school, as they will guide you to making your final choice. While holding onto your non-negotiables, it is important to keep an open mind throughout the process as there are many options for high school.

STEPS FOR PREPARATION

Independent-School Considerations:

Each school will have a unique set of requirements for your application process, please review this in great detail.

- Obtain admissions materials
 - Contact the admissions office of your desired school and request all admission materials
 - Share with MAC your preferred school list so we can develop a relationship and help with the communication process
- Complete the family application: all schools have an online application. The online application includes:
 - Questions for parents
 - Short answer and essay questions for students (look for school-specific supplemental essay prompts)
- Email MAC teachers about writing recommendations. While the online application will send the recommendation link to the teacher directly, it is important to let the teacher know they should be receiving it because they can go to SPAM.
- Request an in-person shadow/tour
 - The parent interview and student interview often takes place during the tour or shadow day
- Prepare for testing - make sure to receive testing dates
 - Attend weekly sessions with Middle School Staff
 - Sign up for ISEE (Independent School Entrance Exam) or HSPT (High School Placement Test) at various locations
- Be prepared to attend weekend sessions
- Think about a portfolio of work if art focused. Portfolios can be helpful even when informal.

Public School Considerations:

- Know the choice process
 - Review the process on your district's website for school night information as well as be mindful of all deadlines unique to each school. *For example:* DSA may have an earlier deadline for materials than East, as well as auditions.
 - Visit each school's website to better understand their tour and shadow process
 - No testing is usually needed, but placement tests in the spring will often be administered if you enroll.

Parochial School Considerations:

Parochial schools tend to be smaller communities than many public schools, but larger than most independent options. Each school is unique to its approach both to religion as well as academics. It is important to visit the school to see what is a good fit for you and your student.

- Testing is typically required for entry, check with admissions for all requirements
- Application: Some, but not all of these schools will require an interview as part of your shadow date. You will have to complete an application and provide letters of recommendation.

HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING MEETINGS

We will be checking in on the high school search process during each conference. Between conferences please reach out with any questions or concerns that you may have about the process.

High School Fair - Tuesday, October 3, 6:30-8 pm at @ St. Elizabeth's School

This year, St Elizabeths will be hosting the High School Fair, which is a great opportunity to learn about options for high school. Students will have the opportunity to collect materials and talk with members of the admissions team of each school.

TEST PREP - ISEE/HSPT

If you are interested in test preparation support for the ISEE and/or HSPT tests, please note the options listed below. Please know these options are entirely optional and provided only as opportunities if you would like to pursue them. Each test will be offered at your chosen school.

In-person test-prep: Each Wednesday at MAC, from 7:30 - 8:15 am, staff provides testing guidance using the PSAT and HSPT guides.

INTERVIEWING

Each school has a unique interview process for both students and for families.

The interview questions might include:

- What do you enjoy doing outside of school?
- When you encounter a challenge at school what do you do?
- What types of opportunities for leadership are you interested in pursuing?

For caregivers they might ask questions like:

- How do you envision a partnership between you and your student's school?
- What types of committees or school commitments are you interested in?

Note: for students who are interviewing a MAC faculty member will schedule a time to meet with the student, talk through interview tips and tricks, and practice interviewing. Admissions officers want to know who you are as a student and as a community member. Have 2-3 stories ready to convey these ideas about who you are.

THINKING ABOUT FINANCES (Caregivers):

All independent schools aim to provide equitable access to their programs and to families. Below are some generalized questions when considering tuition assistance.

How should we apply for financial assistance?

Each school should have a financial aid office to assist you in the process of understanding the program asks, protocols and deadlines. Most independent schools use FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment, School and Student Services (SSS) application or other resources from NAIS (www.sss.nais.org). These forms may take several weeks to process, so you allow ample time for paperwork by the required deadlines.

Clarity (app.clarityapp.com) is a popular new financial aid platform and can be easier because of how it links to IRS data.

How do schools make their decision on awarding financial assistance?

Schools consider the holistic picture of a family's financial picture to afford educational expenses when determining the allocation of financial aid funds. Each school reviews data from the aforementioned assessments to inform the school's decisions. Once this is calculated a school may consider their allocated funds for the upcoming year to make decisions. The school then considers the amount of its financial aid funds available for the upcoming year.

In general, most schools DO NOT base grants and funding on academic, athletic, or similar "achievements" criteria. They DO, however, distribute funds to address their current families' needs and toward school policy goals and mission

GENERAL TIMELINE

September

- Look online/call schools to request admissions information.
- Be on the lookout for emails from Gabby or Shawn about upcoming high school events.
 - Set application deadlines in your calendar

October

- Begin filling out applications.
 - Select ACIS Denver schools use a common teacher recommendation form
 - Submit any financial assistance forms alongside school applications
 - Reach out to teachers about interest in submitting a recommendation form and
- Historically, LPS open enrollment period starts in early October.
- Attend Open Houses and Informational Evenings at various schools (as available – these may be virtual).
- Oct-Nov: Visit your prospective schools in person when possible.

November

- Continue working on application forms.
- Submit requests for recommendations and transcripts to school registrar, Jessica Hyatt, **before Thanksgiving Break**.
- Register for necessary entrance/placement tests (ISEE, HSPT, or SSAT).
 - Check with specific schools for dates, times, and requirements.
- Spend time over Thanksgiving Break working on applications for independent schools.
 - **Please be sure to submit all recommendation requests to teachers and administration before Thanksgiving Break.** This allows teachers time to carefully write recommendations, while also allowing MAC time to track and send all materials necessary to ensure an airtight high school application.

December

- Take necessary entrance/placement tests.
 - Spend some time over vacation completing applications.
 - Deadlines for applications to some schools.

School	Recommendations Available	Recommendations Due / Complete Date
Colorado Academy	application goes live Sept 1	12/15/2023 Sibling Deadline; 1/15/2024 overall deadline
Kent Denver School	11/15/2023	Sibling Deadline: 1/15/2023, Overall Deadline: 1/31/2024
St. Mary's Academy	10/1/2023	1/31/2024

January & February

- Deadlines for applications to most independent schools.
- February 15 Financial Aid applications are due.

ACIS ADMISSIONS NOTIFICATION

Upper School (defined as grades 9-12th) Friday, February 23, 2024 at 4pm (online notification). Courtesy date: Monday 2/26. Response date: Tuesday 3/5.

- Check with schools to ensure that your file is complete.
- Historically, DPS School Choice Round 1 opens mid-January and closes mid-February. · Historically, APS open enrollment period starts in mid-January.
- Historically, notifications of acceptances for independent and parochial schools go out mid to late-February.

March-April

- This has been when families have let independent schools know if they intend to enroll for the fall.
- Historically, this is when notification of acceptances for boarding schools arrive (early March).
- Historically, this is when notification on choice-in applications for Denver Public Schools arrive (late March/early April).