



**COLLEGE COUNSELING
HANDBOOK
2024-25**

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction and Philosophy	Pages 4-7
	Mission	
	Important Names and Numbers	
	Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Disclosure Policy	
	The College Process: An Overview	
II.	Timetables	Pages 8-11
	Junior Year Monthly Checklist	
	Senior Year Monthly Checklist	
III.	Standardized Testing	Pages 12-15
	Overview	
	PSAT/NMSQT, PSAT10, and PACT	
	SAT and SAT Subject Tests	
	ACT	
	ACT versus SAT	
	Special Accommodations	
	Test Preparation	
	Official Score Reports	
	Testing Schedule	
	Policies on Registration & Waitlist/Standby Testing	
	English Proficiency Testing	
IV.	The College Search	Pages 16-22
	Beginning the College Search, Developing a List & Naviance	
	How to Request Admission Materials	
	Colleges Visiting Dublin School	
	College Visit Options and Policies	
	Suggestions for a Successful College Visit	
	Questions to Ask Your Tour Guide	
	Interview Practice Questions	
	Evaluating Your College Visit Form	
V.	What Are Colleges Looking for?	Pages 23-25
	Academics	
	Test Scores	
	Essays and Writing Samples	
	Extracurricular Activities and Work Experience	
	Recommendations	
	Interview/Demonstrated Interest	

VI. The Application	Pages 26-31
Types of Applications	
Deadlines	
Responsibilities	
Dublin School Transcript & School Profile	
College Essays	
Résumés	
VII. Special Talents	Pages 30-40
Athletics and the College Process	
NCAA Clearinghouse	
Questions for the Student-Athlete to Ask	
Cover Letter to Coach	
Cover Letter to Special Interest Person	
Art Portfolios for the College Application and A Word about Art School	
Applying to Music Programs	
Applying to Dance and Theater Programs	
VIII. Learning Differences and the Process	Pages 40-42
Levels of Support	
Questions when looking at schools	
Documentation, Disclosure, Language Waivers	
IX. Financial Aid and Scholarships	Pages 42-45
Questions to Ask When Visiting	
Tips & Forms	
Merit Aid	
X. Final Thoughts & Helpful Tips	Page 45
XI. Useful Resources: Books and Websites	Pages 46-47

I. Introduction and Philosophy

Mission

Dear Students and Parents,

True to Dublin School's mission, the College Office strives to offer an individualized and supportive college counseling experience. At the same time, the process requires balanced ownership by students, parents, and the college counselor. The main role of the counselor is to provide relevant and timely information and support students with their applications and aspirations. The hope is that through support from the College Office and parents, students will develop as informed decision makers, take responsibility for meeting deadlines, learn self-advocacy skills, and compose personal writing through self-reflection. The process can be less stressful and more rewarding if each step is done in a timely fashion. Experience has also proven that regular and honest communication between students, parents, and the counselor helps to create a satisfying and positive college process.

I look forward to working with you and welcome your emails, calls, and visits.

Sincerely,

Holly Macy
Director of College Counseling

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Ethical Practice in College Admission & Disciplinary Disclosure Policy

Dublin School's College Office is a member of New England Association for College Admission Counseling (NEACAC), the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and the Association of College Counselors of Independent Schools (ACCIS). These organizations and Dublin's College Office support NACAC's *Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission*. Among the most important practices that Dublin School subscribes to:

- Dublin does not endorse more than one early decision application, and we will not support more than one admission deposit unless there are special circumstances communicated to the College Office. Your final transcript will only be sent to one college where you intend to enroll.
- Students, families and Dublin School have a shared ethical responsibility in the college process. It is unethical to submit false, plagiarized, or fraudulent statements on applications or other documents. Students will sign statements on their college applications stating that all of the information is honest and accurate, and all writing is their own.
- In keeping with Dublin School's motto "Truth and Courage" and NACAC's best practices, **when asked**, the student and/or the College Office will disclose all discipline that leads to out of school suspension or dismissal.

The College Process: An overview

During the fall term, the junior class will have short presentations on topics such as the college process timeline and the PSAT. Students are invited to access Self-Directed Search, an interest and career discovery tool, and they will be given information to setup a Naviance Student Account in order to complete a Junior Survey. These experiences encourage students to reflect on their past educational history and consider future goals. A free PSAT prep webinar will be offered ahead of the PSAT in October, which all juniors are recommended to take. During Family Weekend in October, parents and caregivers are invited to attend a presentation with the college counselor to get an overview of the process, and they may schedule a conference with the college counselor during that weekend event. At that time, parents are given information to create a parent Naviance account online and to complete a Parent Response Survey that is shared with the College Office only.

The College Process at Dublin School more formally begins during the winter of junior year. PSAT score results, the academic record, and the information provided by the surveys help create the centerpiece of a student's initial College Office meeting. During this meeting, the counselor creates an initial list and assists students with creating a standardized test plan. Parents and caregivers will be sent a summary of that meeting to keep informed. Fall Break, February or March breaks are ideal times for students to connect with colleges by requesting information, accessing virtual admission events, and/or touring campuses.

During the spring months, students are encouraged to meet with the College Counselor again to further develop the college list. The list will be added to, updated, and changed throughout the process by parents, students, and the College Office and it will be posted and accessible to all parties on-line through Naviance. Students will attend a College Fair in April. This is an opportunity for students to briefly meet with college admission counselors and obtain information from schools they are considering.

At the end of the school year, the College Counselor, in conjunction with junior-year English teachers, will help students develop a resume and first draft of a college essay. This personal writing will help students reflect on who they are and where they are heading.

Armed with an initial college list, students and parents will find guidebooks, internet searches, and college visits helpful in their quest to fine-tune the college list throughout the summer. Dublin's Fall Break can be used for last visits before applications are submitted. Summer is also the ideal time to continue essay work and begin completing the Common Application, and the College Office will provide information and suggestions of tasks to complete.

Throughout the fall of senior year, students are strongly encouraged to meet with the College Counselor to finalize the college list and refine applications and essays. With some students, this work takes just a couple of meetings; while with others, it may take multiple check-ins until applications are submitted. The College Office strives to meet the needs of individuals and yet it assumes that students will be an active part of

managing their college application work. For example, the counselor invites seniors to share essays and allow them to proofread applications, but this step is not insisted upon. Students are encouraged to take charge of their process!

During the spring of junior year or early fall of senior year, students must ask teachers if they are willing to write a letter of recommendation on their behalf. **Students must ask teachers no later than October 1.** Most colleges typically require a Counselor Report and one or two classroom teacher recommendation letters. A student should ask teachers from their junior or senior year in core disciplines or in an area that pertains to the student's intended area of study. In some cases, students include an additional letter of recommendation from an employer, coach, etc. to provide an additional perspective. Students must complete a Privacy Notice on-line in their Naviance account waiving their right to access recommendation letters.

Students are responsible for paying for and sending their applications, and for ordering official SAT and/or ACT score reports to send to each college when required. Sending official score reports of any kind is the student's responsibility. Please note that a student need only send an official AP score report to the college where they eventually matriculate. For applications, students can simply self-report AP scores in the test score section.

The College Office is responsible for sending out: Dublin School's Profile along with the Dublin School transcript, a Counselor Letter and School Report, and teacher recommendation(s). If a student has attended a high school before entering Dublin School, **it is the student's responsibility to supply an official copy to the College Office**, so that it can be sent alongside the student's Dublin transcript.

Students who are interested in applying Early Decision or Early Action must be ready to meet those deadlines, often as early as November 1st, and a select number of state schools have even earlier deadlines. The college process adds a great deal of work to a senior's fall term and can be quite stressful if they return to school having done little or no work over the summer. By planning and taking advantage of summer months to fine-tune the college list, begin applications, and essays, students will find they are able to better manage their responsibilities in their senior year.

II. Timetables

Junior Year Monthly Checklist

Fall:

___ Consider visiting one larger school and one smaller school to get an initial feel for college campuses. Family Weekend can be a great time for visits.

___ Prioritize your academics! Do your best work in your classes. Academic performance is the most important part of your application.

___ Review your PSAT results when they are released and link your results to Khan Academy for customized test prep. Consider the ACT as an alternative to the SAT by taking a diagnostic test offered anytime online by Revolution Prep.

___ Talk over college plans and ideas with your parents and friends home from college.

___ Meet with college representatives who visit Dublin School from schools that are of interest to you. Schedule posted in Naviance and emailed out weekly to juniors and seniors.

___ Begin the athletic recruitment process if applicable by talking to your coach, the Athletic Director, and Ms. Macy.

January-February:

___ Fill-out the Junior Year Survey in Naviance Student.

___ Review for standardized testing by utilizing free, online Khan Academy prep or enroll in Revolution Prep courses offered through our partner prep program (though break time is more ideal for comprehensive test prep).

___ Meet with Mrs. Macy to begin to discuss your future testing plans and develop a college list.

___ Register for SAT or ACT as needed.

March-May:

___ Review for standardized testing as needed.

___ Visit colleges over break and contact schools of interest for information/get on mailing lists.

___ Continue to meet with Mrs. Macy to work on your college list.

___ Consider whether you want to develop a supplement to your application for the visual or performing arts, writing, or technology.

___ Attend a Lakes Region College Fair April 10, 2025, with Ms. Macy.

___ Plan a challenging yet realistic senior year course load and discuss with your advisor and Mrs. Macy.

___ Ask a junior year teacher(s) for recommendations if you are ready to choose. You can make requests up until October 1 of senior year.

___ Share your English class assigned college essay draft with Ms. Macy

___ Save a graded paper that you are proud of (some colleges require one).

___ Consider your summer plans: summer courses, jobs, internships, activities, etc.

___ Contact coaches if pursuing athletic recruitment.

___ Register on the NCAA Clearinghouse website if considering Division I or II athletics.

ENJOY SUMMER

Begin work on the

SENIOR YEAR CHECKLIST!

Senior Year Monthly Checklist

June-September:

___ Complete the Senior Survey in Naviance Student.

___ Visit colleges, send thank-you notes, interview if offered.

___ Connect with the schools that you are not visiting to request information, research and attend virtual opportunities.

___ Utilize Khan Academy for test prep or enroll in Revolution Prep courses for SAT or ACT as needed.

___ Continue filling out the Common Application at www.commonapp.org

___ Continue work on your college essay(s) and email Ms. Macy or teachers for feedback.

___ Register for fall standardized tests as needed.

___ Fine-tune your college list and update your Naviance account.

___ Consider your responsibilities if applying Early Decision or Early Action and check deadlines!

___ Register for the NCAA Clearinghouse if pursuing Division I or II sports (if not already completed). Continue coach contacts.

___ Begin research for scholarships and consider using the FAFSA4caster and Net Price Calculator tools to better understand your family's financial contribution estimates at www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov (see section on Financial Aid for more info).

___ Make an appointment to see Mrs. Macy in the College Office upon return to school.

October-December

___ Finalize your college list with Ms. Macy, update it on Naviance, and share with your parents.

___ Finalize decision if applying Early Decision or Early Action by the beginning of October.

___ Complete your applications and essays and get them proof-read.

___ Register for last standardized testing if needed.

___ **Send official test score reports to colleges** if required. Some schools will accept self-reported scores in your application while others require official score reports. Check with each of your schools.

___ Ask teachers for recommendations no later than **October 1**.

___ Complete the CSS/Profile and FAFSA if applying for financial aid. Be aware of financial aid form deadlines at each school.

___ Attend the financial aid meeting offered by zoom during the week of Family Weekend.

January-February

___ Submit any remaining applications and financial aid materials.

___ Research scholarships (see appendix).

___ Thank your teachers who wrote your recommendations.

March-May:

___ Review all college responses and aid offers with your parents and Mrs. Macy.

___ Notify the college of your choice and send deposit to be received by May 1st.

___ Notify the remaining schools where you were accepted that you will not be attending.

___ Send official AP score report to the college you will be attending by selecting your college score report recipient when you take the AP exam.

Note: Ms. Macy will send a student's Final Report and transcript to the student's chosen school by mid-June.

III. Standardized Testing

Overview

Standardized testing can be an important part of an applicant's admission file at many selective colleges and universities, though since the pandemic, many institutions have shifted to a test optional or test blind admission process. A complete list of those schools can be found on-line at www.fairtest.org. Those schools may ask for other supplemental information, such as a graded paper or additional essay, and transcripts and course rigor become even more emphasized in the application review process.

Students who plan carefully and familiarize themselves with testing formats using practice materials are often able to attain scores that reflect their high school performance. It is important that students understand testing requirements at the schools they are considering. A student's academic achievement, as outlined on their transcript, is the most important part of a student's application. For some students it can be a better strategy to apply to only test optional schools. This can be recommended if a student needs to focus time and energy on their academic work or if their PSAT results show that the ceiling for score improvement is low. This will be a topic of conversation when the college counselor meets with each junior as reviews PSAT results. Many students end up submitting scores to some of their schools and not at others. By looking at each school's middle 50% of scores of admitted students, we decide on whether to include scores in each application.

Sophomore Year PSAT and optional practice ACT

All sophomores will sit for a practice SAT on a Wednesday, April 16, 2025 and can access an optional online practice ACT in April. Revolution Prep offers these tests to our students for free and will provide a score report review session with each family following the test. The goal is to give students practice taking a timed assessment and introduce them to the PSAT and ACT formats and content. It is also helpful to decide early on which test a student prefers.

Digital PSAT/NMSQT- Wednesday, October 9, 2024

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is cosponsored by the College Board and the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The test measures reading, language, writing and math skills. The College Office registers all juniors to take this test in October at Dublin School unless the family waives this requirement. The following September more than two-thirds of the high scorers nation-wide will be designated Commended Students. Commended Students will receive a Letter of Commendation, which will be sent to Dublin School. These students will not continue in the competition for Merit Scholarship Awards. Less than 1% of the nation's high school graduating seniors will qualify as Semifinalists. Only Semifinalists will have an opportunity to advance in the competition for Merit Scholarship awards. NMSC will notify Semifinalists of their standing and send application materials to them in September of the senior year.

Digital SAT Reasoning Test

The College Board's SAT exam strives to assess college readiness by testing the skills that students build in the classroom such as understanding vocabulary in context, solving real-world math problems, and analyzing primary source documents. Most juniors take an official SAT in the spring term and again in the fall of senior year unless they have determined that they prefer the ACT.

Students register for the test by creating an account on-line at www.collegeboard.com. Students will use this account to register for tests, view their scores, access score report analysis, and send official score reports to colleges as a part of application requirements. On most test dates, Dublin School provides transportation to and from a local test center (see list below.)

ACT

The ACT (American College Testing) is a standardized test that schools will accept in place of the SAT. The ACT is comprised of four tests (English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning). Students register for the ACT by creating an account on-line at www.actstudent.org. Most juniors take an official ACT in the spring term and again in the fall of senior year unless they have determined that they prefer the SAT. Very few colleges will consider the ACT optional essay section, so it is often not necessary to take it.

ACT versus SAT

The formats are different on these two tests, so some students find that they score higher on one versus the other. Since the redesigned SAT launching in March of 2016, the two tests have become more similar in the skills being tested. A few of the major differences are:

- ACT has a science section which does not test specific science content but critical thinking skills and analysis of data and graphs
- Math weighs 25% of score on ACT and 50% of the score on the SAT
- ACT has *slightly* more advanced math questions
- ACT's big challenge is time crunch (fast pace needed). SAT's big challenge is higher-order thinking skills
- SAT is completed digitally using one's device or a device provided by the test center.

Special Accommodations

Accommodations for the SAT and ACT are available to those students who have a diagnosed and properly documented learning disability and are *actively using* the accommodations in school. An application and documentation must be completed to obtain accommodations, and the College Board and ACT have separate processes for this. Please note that it can take a couple of months for this process to be completed so it is essential to plan. Dublin School's Learning Skills Department will contact all students eligible for accommodations well in advance of the PSAT and will assist you with the application process. It is important to note that when a student is approved for extended time accommodation, they must sit through the **entire** allotted extra time for each section before advancing to the next section.

Test Preparation

Students must also take responsibility for test preparation. Dublin School is partnered with Revolution Prep, an SAT and ACT prep program that provides small class or individual test prep. They also offer to students and parents free informational webinars and individual score reviews. All tutoring and prep courses are offered live, online. Scholarships are available. Khan Academy also offers free, online customized SAT prep if a student links their PSAT results to Khan.

Official Score Reports

Students are responsible for sending official SAT or ACT score reports to the schools to which they wish to include scores in their application and/or to schools that require an official score report. A growing number of schools will allow applicants to self-report their test scores (and thus save on fees). Students send official score reports by logging into their College Board or ACT account, requesting recipients, and paying for score reports. It is the student's responsibility to check each school's policies.

In most cases, students may choose which SAT scores to send by test date. If a student scores their highest Math section score on one test date and highest Critical Reading score on another test date, they should send scores for both test dates. Most colleges will look at the highest scores for each section, even if achieved on different test dates. This is called Super-scoring.

The ACT score reporting process is different from the SAT and not all colleges will Super-score the ACT. There is more nuance to sending an official ACT score report, so please speak with the College Counselor or learn more at:
<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/new-act-options/superscoring.html>

Official AP scores are not sent to colleges. Students may elect to self-report AP scores within their application and should do so for a score of 4 or 5. For some situations, a score of 3 is also a beneficial data point in the application but should be discussed with the college counselor.

Testing Schedule

PSAT/NMSQT is recommended for juniors. A family may contact the College Office to waiver their student from sitting for the test: October 9th 8:30am at Dublin School.

SAT 2024-2025 (www.collegeboard.com)

Test Date:	Register by:	Testing locations for boarding students:
8/24/24	8/9/24	School Break
10/5/24*	9/20/24	Keene High, NH Test Center code: 30165
11/2/24	10/18/24	Keene High, NH Test Center code: 30165
12/7/24	11/22/24	Cushing Academy, MA Test Center code: 22132
3/8/25	2/21/25	Fitchburg High School, MA Test Center code: 22368
5/3/25	4/18/25	Keene High, NH Test Center code: 30165
6/7/25		School Break

ACT 2024-25 (www.actstudent.org)

Test Date:	Register by:	Testing location for Boarding Students:
9/14/24	8/9/24	Northfield Mt Hermon Test Center Code: 153220
10/26/24*	9/20/24	Northfield Mt Hermon Test Center Code: 153220
12/14/24	11/8/24	Fitchburg High School, MA Test Center Code: 165850
2/8/25	1/3/25	Fitchburg High School, MA Test Center Code: 165850
4/5/25	3/28/25	Fitchburg High School, MA Test Center Code: 165850
6/14/25	5/9/25	School Break

*=Last test date if applying early

English Proficiency Testing

If English is not your first language, it is possible that you will need to submit English proficiency test scores at the time of your application. Some schools will waive this requirement if you have spent all 4 years of high school in the US or have a minimum SAT Reading score. Make sure to check requirements for each of the schools you are considering. The Toefl iBT is the most common score to submit to demonstrate proficiency, although some schools will now accept a Duolingo score instead. Please speak with the College Office about what test may best support your process.

IV. The College Search

Beginning the Search, Developing a List & Naviance

During the winter and once students have completed the PSAT and/or PACT and the Junior Year Survey in Naviance, they meet with the College Counselor to develop an initial list. It is helpful for parents or caregivers to complete the Parent Response Form in Naviance by this time so that the counselor has gained their perspective. Some students will come to this meeting with schools already in mind. Other students will attend the initial meeting with little to no idea about how to begin the college search. The College Counselor can help direct students to appropriate prospective schools.

It is important to keep in mind that a “good fit” should entail academic fit, emotional fit, and financial fit. A beneficial way of labeling or judging schools is to ask, “Do I have room to grow at this institution? How do I know the things I know about this institution? Is my impression based on facts, website marketing, campus visit, guidebooks, word of mouth, etc.?” Our goal is for students to become informed consumers, which means taking time to do the research and reflection required to build a college list. Parents and caregivers and the college counselor are here to support, provide direction, and ask questions of our students to help them articulate goals and desires.

It can be helpful at the outset of the search to identify criteria that is important to the student and family. Criteria may include public versus private institutions, a liberal arts curriculum, size, location, makeup of the student body, academic programs and fields of study, campus life, student culture, cost, and financial aid policies.

There are many resources available to help in the research process. Naviance Student is a useful college search tool and provides information about each school, such as size, admission requirements, academic programs, and graphs that analyze Dublin School alumni admission outcomes. Other websites have similar search tools (see bibliography for more extensive list of college search tools, books, and places to access reliable data.) Students will have an opportunity to attend a College Fair in April with the College Counselor. At this event, students connect with admission counselors.

A student’s college list is always accessible to students and parents through Naviance Student (<https://student.naviance.com/dublinschool>), an on-line program to which Dublin School subscribes. Parents are given their personal log-in information at Family Weekend in the fall of a student’s junior year. Parents are encouraged to attend a presentation that provides an overview of the college process given by the college counselor that weekend.

Students will go into the summer months with an updated prospective list as the counselor has a chance to review end of year grades and spring test scores. The goal over the summer is for students to develop a balanced list with 6-10 schools which fall into three categories: Likely Admission, Possible, and Reach. The College Counselor helps families categorize schools into the groupings. It is important to remember that the groupings are estimates; there are no guarantees in today’s competitive college

admissions world. Factors such as the intended major, the college essay, and demonstrated interest may impact outcomes alongside academic achievement and rigor. These estimates also assume continued strong course work and a well-presented application and essays.

Request Admissions Materials from a College or University

- Use college websites to request information and get on mailing lists.
- Connect with colleges at the junior year college fair in the spring.

Colleges Visiting Dublin School

Throughout the fall, admission counselors from numerous colleges and universities visit Dublin School to meet with prospective students. Juniors and seniors with a sincere interest in the visiting institution may miss class to meet with the representative in the College Counseling Office. However, students must get teacher permission **prior** to missing class. A complete list of schools visiting campus this fall is accessible through Naviance.

College Visit Options and Policy

We encourage families to use vacation time to do college visits. However, with advanced permission seniors are permitted to miss some class days to visit colleges. In special circumstances juniors will also be permitted to miss some class days for college tours. **Students must communicate in advance with the Dean of Students Office at least three days prior to departure.**

It is easiest to schedule a college visit by making an appointment online through a college's admission website. If you don't make advance arrangements, you may have limited options for your visit, but it is important to stop in the admission office if you are doing your own self-tour to check in and pick up a map and leave your name. Visit options that schools may offer:

- **Tours-** these generally last 60-90 minutes and are run by a current student. If there are particular buildings you want to see, be sure to ask if you can stop by it or have it pointed out so you can revisit after the tour. Take advantage of asking the tour guide lots of questions as this is your chance to hear the student perspective.
- **Group Information Sessions-** these usually run 60 minutes and are run by an admission counselor. Sometimes a current student co-leads the session. These sessions cover general information about the academic and co-curricular programs at the school, as well as a brief overview of the admission process.
- **In-person interviews-** Many colleges no longer offer in-person interviews. If they are offered, it is usually recommended that you schedule one. These can be

hosted by an admission counselor or senior interviewer. Some interviews are evaluative, and some are informative- you can ask.

- **Off-campus/virtual interviews-** It may be possible to schedule an off-campus interview with a counselor who is visiting your region, and some schools offer virtual interviews. Admission websites give specific information about scheduling these options.
- **Alumni interview-** Some colleges use trained alumni volunteers to accommodate interview requests. Each school uses these opportunities differently, so it is best to check on what is offered, when and where. Typically, these are not scheduled until after you submit your application. Requesting an optional, alumni interview can be a great way to demonstrate interest in the school.
- **Class Visits-** During the year, prospective students can often request to attend a class with advance scheduling.
- **Overnights-** Some colleges offer overnight accommodations for visiting students. Generally, these are not offered on the weekend and are limited to one night.
- **Meetings with Coaches, Music Professors, or Learning Specialists-** If you want to learn specifics about a particular department or program, you can reach out to schedule a meeting directly with the coach or professor. Do not have a parent do this outreach!

Suggestions for a Successful College Visit

- Do not schedule more than two schools per day. Give yourself enough time to roam the campus and build in a cushion of time in your travel schedule.
- Be punctual! If you are going to be late despite your best efforts, call the admissions office to inform them of your situation.
- Learn as much as possible about the college before you visit. Be prepared both to answer and ask questions.
- Give some advance thought to the things you want to look for and ask about. Having a list of questions with you is acceptable.
- Parents/caregivers do not participate in the admissions interview although they are sometimes invited to speak with the officer following the interview.
- Be yourself-be honest, sincere and interested. Look the interviewer in the eye. Ask your tour guide questions.
- Be prepared to share why you have chosen to visit this particular college.
- Dress neatly but be yourself and don't feel you have to dress formally

- Make sure to give yourself enough time to explore the layout of the campus, scan bulletin boards, read the school newspaper, sample food in the cafeteria, and visit dorms.
- If you interview, be sure to note the name of your interviewer in order to write a follow-up **letter or email**.
- Try to get the name of the admission counselor who is assigned to read NH applicants. This person is a great person to contact if you have questions and/or to make a connection.
- Jot down a few notes about your visit afterwards or fill out the Evaluating Your Visit Form

Questions to Ask Your Tour Guide

What size are classes generally? For freshmen? Upperclassmen?

Who teaches you in courses? Graduate assistants or professors?

How available are your professors? What kind of advising system is in place?

What is the tour guide's favorite class they've taken and why?

Does the school have a core curriculum? How restrictive is it?

Describe the typical workload and how students are most likely to be assessed?

What percentage of students study abroad?

What percentage of freshmen return for their sophomore year?

What are weekends like? What percentage of students remains on campus?

How active is student government? What activities are popular? Athletics? Arts?

What do you like best about your experience and education here?

What do students complain about or want to see change?

Where do students come from? Is this a diverse community?

What kinds of living accommodations are there? Dorms? Apartments?

What supportive services are available to students? Tutoring? Career services?

What kinds of students do you think are most happy here?

Interview Preparation and Practice Questions

Goals of a successful interview and tips:

- The student gains a greater understanding of the programs and offerings at the school.
- The admission counselor gains information about the candidate to help the admission committee make a good decision.
- Be yourself and be ready to talk about your hobbies, goals, and high school experience
- Prepare questions to ask the interviewer (questions that are not easily searched online)
- Show versus Tell (use specific examples to show what you want to communicate)
- Be yourself

Basic Interview Questions

- **Questions about your fit with a college**

Why do you want to attend our college? What do you like about this particular school/program?

What can you contribute to our college campus?

Strategy: Talk about what you've learned about the college and why you feel it's the right place for you. Discuss your extracurricular activities and achievements that show your character.

- **Questions about your personality**

What are 3 adjectives that describe you?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Strategy: Give examples of how your chosen adjectives describe you. Talk about how you've used your strengths to accomplish something. Talk about how you overcome your weaknesses.

- **Questions about activities, interests, goals**

What activities do you find most rewarding?

What is your favorite book or subject?

What do you want to do after graduation? (It is okay to be undecided!)

Strategy: Think about the **why**: Why are those activities most rewarding? Why is it your favorite subject? If you have a major in mind, talk about why you're interested in that subject. Discuss how you think college can help you meet your goals. Be sincere and honest!

- **Wide-ranging questions**

Interview may ask some broader questions

If you had a thousand dollars to give away, what would you do with it?

If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be?

Strategy: Stay up to date on news. Share your opinions and explain your position. Your answers will reflect your values and how you think about the larger world.

Additional Interview Practice Questions:

How is your summer going? What are you doing/did you do?

How is senior year going? What courses are you taking and what activities are you involved with on campus?

Do you feel your grades are an accurate reflection of your actual abilities?

Are you satisfied with your test scores?

If you have changed secondary schools, be prepared to talk about why you transferred.

How did you hear about XXX College? Have you ever been to campus before?

What are you looking for in a college? Do you have specific academic interests? Extracurricular interests?

How familiar are you with this school and its programs? How much do you know about our curriculum?

What are your career goals? Do you have a major in mind?

What are your academic strengths and weaknesses?

How would you describe your high school and how would you change it?

What accomplishments have you achieved, or activities have you participated in that have had a particular effect on you and your life?

Which one of your activities has given you the most satisfaction?

If you had high school to do over again, would you do anything differently?

What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school?

What books or articles have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking? Have you read one author or genre deeply? What are you currently reading?

Do you have any further questions about XXX College?

Check out this video by the College Essay Guy for additional tips to prepare!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnMgao_ydK4

Evaluating Your College Visit Form

Name of College:

Date visited:

Names of people to remember:

What is distinctive about this school? What is it proud of or promoting?

Comment about the academic program: class size, core requirements, strong majors...

Comment about the quality of teaching, access to professors, advising ...

Comment on the appeal of campus: layout, facilities for art and sports, computer lab, dorms, surroundings...

Comment on the students: diversity, academically motivated, a good match for me...

Comment on the quality of life: food, dorms, social activities, surrounding town...

Comment on the extracurricular programs: athletics, arts, clubs...

Do I believe this is a likely, possible, or reach school for me...

My general impressions...

V. What Are Colleges Looking for?

A strong application is one that accurately reflects who you are, your unique identity and values, how you've engaged in and outside of the classroom, what academic and non-academic interests you have, how you're making an impact or taking initiative on your interests and shares your future goals and aspirations. It is important to stand back and look at the whole picture of what you've included to make sure it represents you. Those pieces of information are your personal profile, the high school transcript, standardized test scores, essay(s) and/or writing samples, extracurricular activities, work experience, the Counselor Recommendation and Teacher Recommendations, and any other supplemental information you provide. Examples of supplemental information are digital submission of recorded music, written or theatrical work, a visual art portfolio, scientific research, or a writing portfolio. Athletic recruiting can also play a role in the admission process.

Academics

All the college admission counselors we've met have said that the high school transcript is the most important piece of an applicant's admission file. Admission counselors are asking themselves, "Will this applicant be academically successful here?" "How have they engaged in and outside of the classroom in academic areas of interest?" An admission counselor is looking not only at grades, but at the rigor of a student's schedule *within the context of what curriculum is offered at Dublin School*. In general, it is highly encouraged that students pursue four years in each of the core subject areas: English, History, Mathematics, Science, and Foreign Language. If a student chooses to drop one of these core courses, it is advisable to add another core class and conference with the College Counselor and Academic Dean about this decision.

Some students have a tough time deciding whether to take one of more AP or Advanced level courses. Most admission counselors would say that earning a "B" in an AP/Advanced level course is often considered better than an "A" in a regular level course. However, students need to understand that an AP/Advanced course comes with a heavy workload. It is advised that students talk to their advisor, the Academic Dean, the College Counselor, and the AP/Adv teacher to come to an appropriate decision.

Colleges are also looking for consistent strength and/or an upward trend in a student's academic record. Yes, circumstances can arise such as illness, a family situation, or a school transfer, which can affect academic performance. It is best to speak with the college counselor to discuss how to address inconsistencies or a change in performance. Statements from the student and counselor can go a long way in helping to clarify dips that have affected the GPA.

Many seniors are tempted to take it easy during their senior year. Obviously, yielding to that temptation does nothing for a student's application. Seniors are often in a position of having more choice in their course selection. When choosing their courses, seniors should look not just at meeting Dublin School graduation requirements but look to

challenge themselves in their areas of interest. It is also important to understand admission requirements of the college or major to which the student is applying. For example, many business programs expect a student to have had advanced mathematics. Engineering students should have had both physics and calculus. Highly selective liberal arts schools generally look to see that students have continued to study in all five of the core disciplines.

Standardized Test Scores

Many schools still review SAT or ACT scores, though the pandemic has made testing optional at many institutions. To determine whether to submit your test scores at a test optional school, look at the college's admitted student profile to see if your scores fall within or above the middle 50% of admitted students. If your scores do not, then you should likely opt to not submit scores to that specific school. Rarely do test scores or non-submission of scores make or break an application. One admission dean recently said, "Strong scores can be a plus but probably not a single disqualifying factor." Data from this past admission cycle does show that submitting scores does help a school predict the likelihood that they will yield an applicant, so scores can be a helpful part in demonstrating interest but not the only way to do so!

International students may also need to submit English Language Proficiency scores. Schools will often accept TOEFL or Duolingo scores, but it is best to look at each school's requirements. Some schools will waive the need for scores if the student has a particular SAT score or has spent 4 years studying in the US.

Essays, Writing Samples, Video Introductions

Your personal essay is the part of the application in which you can share a part of you such as your values, passions, or character. By reading your essay, the admission counselor will get a better vision of how you may impact and contribute to the campus community. After completing a draft, ask yourself, "Does the essay reflect something meaningful about me? Have I demonstrated that I am able to write articulately and grammatically correct?" Your essay should not merely list off your past experiences, it should 'show' more than 'tell'. Expect to write many drafts.

A small number of schools will ask for a piece of graded writing. It is helpful to save a couple of graded papers from your junior year. Some schools allow you to upload an optional video about yourself. Be authentic and show more than tell. Consider sharing about an interest or experience that is not otherwise highlighted in your application. Have fun with the space in which you video yourself.

Extracurricular Activities and Work Experience

Depth of involvement is more important than breadth, and students are encouraged to follow their genuine interests rather than what they think will "look good". A college admission counselor can pick out involvement for the sake of résumé building rather than true commitment to an activity. Get involved with activities that are of interest to you, but also reach out and try something new. Once you've found the few activities that

grab you, take on a leadership position within the club or activity. Showing initiative or how you've made an impact within a program or group can be helpful. Using one's summer vacation productively is also important. Holding a job, continuing to pursue one's interests, or attending a summer camp can show your desire to continue to learn and meet responsibilities. By reviewing how you spend your time outside of the classroom, an admission counselor will begin to picture how you might make an impact and get involved on their college campus.

Recommendations

A counselor recommendation/report is almost always required. Usually, two teacher recommendations are also required. It is advisable for a student to submit one recommendation written by a teacher in a core subject area and another from a teacher in an area of academic strength or interest. If applying with a specific major in mind, it is advisable to have a teacher recommendation from within that subject area. Students must ask their teachers if they are willing and able to write a letter on their behalf **no later than October 1st** of senior year. Letters from coaches, advisors, employers, etc. can be a good addition, but can not replace teacher and counselor recommendations. Submitting multiple supplemental recommendations is not advised, so speak with the College Counselor about these decisions. All recommendations are sent by the College Counselor electronically through Naviance.

Interview and Demonstrated Interest

If you have the opportunity, schedule an interview when you visit a college or virtually. This is your opportunity to share more about yourself, ask questions about the admission process and programs at the institution. Be ready to talk about your strengths, weaknesses, goals, etc. Be sure to prepare for the interview by being familiar with the college prior to the visit. Be ready to ask a few questions about the school's programs/ culture. In recent years, some schools have moved away from offering interviews. In this case, try to get the name of the admission counselor who will be responsible for reading your application. Most admission offices divide their staff by geographical territories, so ask for the contact information for the counselor responsible for New Hampshire. If you do not have the chance to meet this counselor during your visit, you can send a follow-up email afterwards.

Some schools track a student's demonstrated interest. As application numbers continue to rise across the nation at the more selective institutions, admission offices often look at a student's demonstrated interest when making final admission decisions. Some schools go so far as to track the number of contacts an applicant has had with the school. An applicant can show interest through getting on mailing lists, campus visits or virtual visits, meeting with an admission counselor at a college fair or at Dublin School or opening emails from schools to learn more. These connections make the applicant more informed about the school. It is appropriate to ask each college if and to what extent demonstrated interest plays a role in their admission review process. You can learn more from The College Essay Guy YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FoPlRnXsDWs>

VI. The Application

Types of Applications

The Common Application

More than a thousand colleges participate in the “Common Application.” Students create an account on-line at www.commonapp.org. In their account, students list the schools on their college list that accept the Common Application. They then fill out one common application form on-line, upload their essay(s), and submit application fee payments by using a credit card to all of their Common App schools that they’ve selected. Some schools require supplements within the Common Application, and they are all accessible and submitted within the school specific questions of the application. It is important to complete the supplements with care because students are often asked to outline their reasons for applying to that school. It is important to do homework and be able to express a deep understanding of why that school is unique and of interest to the applicant. Treat each application as if it is going to your top choice. Fee waivers for application fees are available to those who qualify.

The Coalition Application

The Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success is another application supported by several colleges and universities that subscribe to a common goal of providing greater access. The Coalition App is not easier than the Common Application (and most schools that accept the Coalition App will also accept the Common App). For most students, time is best spent concentrating on the Common App. However, some schools will only take the Coalition App.

State Applications

Some state universities have their own online application because they do not accept the Common Application or Coalition Application. For example, the University of California system has their own “common app” for all UC schools with a deadline of November 30. Many of these large state universities have earlier deadlines, so it is important to keep track, which Naviance will list.

British Universities

The United Kingdom’s university system uses a standardized form that is similar to the Common App in many ways. Applications to British universities are searched and submitted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS). While most universities require applications to be submitted by January 15, we encourage students to apply sooner than later because they operate on a rolling basis of admission. It is also important to make note of the fact that the application is more of an appeal to join a particular ‘course of study’ within a university versus an American style holistic admission application to a college community. Applying to UK schools may require a certain number of AP scores, which takes advanced planning. Cambridge and Oxford have additional application requirements and an earlier deadline of October 15. If considering a UK or other non-US school, it is best to communicate this interest with the college counselor early in the process.

Service Academies

If you are considering one of the service academies, the process begins earlier because of its extensive requirements. Some academies require a nomination by a member of Congress. Evaluation of academic credentials, personal integrity, and physical fitness are all components important to this process. Communicate with the college counselor early in the junior year if this is a pathway you are considering.

Deadlines

There are quite a few different admission options today. **Rolling Admission** means that students can apply to a particular school throughout the year. Applications are reviewed on a first come, first-serve basis and are accepted until the class has been filled. **Early Decision** is an admission policy that asks you to apply early (usually between November 1st and 15th) to be notified early of your admissions decision. You can only apply to one school for Early Decision. If you are accepted, you are **OBLIGATED TO ATTEND** and withdraw all other applications. **Early Action** is an admission policy that allows you to apply early, be notified of your admission status early, but does not commit you to the college. **Single-choice early action** is a plan that works the same way as other early action plans, but with single-choice, candidates may not apply early to any other school. You can still apply to other schools through regular decision and are not required to give your answer until the regular decision deadline.

Early decision might be right for you if,

- You have found your dream school, the place that fits you to a T.
- The school you are considering would still be the place you would go even if you got in to all the other schools on your list.
- The school you are thinking about has all the academic programs you are looking for.
- It is where you want to spend the next four years of your life.
- Your academic record through junior year has been consistently strong. The admission decision will be made after submitting senior year Mid-Semester 1 grades. Semester 1 grades are calculated too late for Early Decision I applications.
- You are not concerned with being able to compare financial aid packages.

Meeting deadlines is a crucial piece to the application process. Naviance and the Common App outline deadlines for each school. Although it is possible to wait until the last day to apply, we strongly advise against this approach because it produces stress amongst students, parents and the College Office. Other pieces of the application, such as official test score reports, can take a few weeks to get filed in the admission office, so advanced planning is important. Different pieces of the application (such as the School Report, official test scores, and recommendations) can be sent on different days ahead of the deadline.

Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to:

- Make sure the College Office has an accurate final college list in Naviance so that transcripts and recommendations get sent to the right schools
- Complete all applications and essays and submit them accompanied by application fees
- Keep track of all deadlines
- Ask teachers for recommendations prior to October 1st
- Send official standardized test scores through the College Board and/or ACT (if self-reported scores are not accepted) to all schools to which you are including them in your application
- Complete the Privacy Notice in Naviance waiving a student's right to access recommendations
- Ensure Ms. Macy has an official copy of transfer transcripts to send on the student's behalf
- Complete all financial application forms, including the CSS Profile and/or the FAFSA if applying for aid. Be aware of these deadlines as they often coincide with app deadlines.

It is the College Office's responsibility to:

- Help students finalize a balanced college list
- Guide students through standardized testing decisions
- Submit Dublin School transcript, the School Profile, a School Report, and Teacher Recommendations to colleges
- Help students organize their application work
- Proofread applications and essays upon request
- Write a counselor letter of recommendation and support the applicant through communication with colleges as necessary throughout the application submission and review process

Dublin School Transcript and School Profile

The Dublin School transcript lists Semester Grades for each course taken while at Dublin School. It also shows the Final Grade and the credit earned for each course. J-Term courses are listed and are Pass/Fail, which does not impact the GPA. Mid-term grades or grades earned at a previous high schools are not included. Dublin School uses a 4.0 grading system, does not weight AP or Advanced courses, and students are not ranked. A student's cumulative Dublin School GPA is calculated on the transcript for all completed courses at Dublin. A copy of transcripts from previous high schools is sent along with Dublin's transcript to all colleges when supplied to the College Office. The College Counselor can help students estimate a four-year GPA for those students who have multiple high school transcripts. Almost all admission offices will recalculate an applicant's GPA using their own system to make the process equitable.

The transcript is sent to colleges accompanied by the School Profile. The School Profile (accessible on the College Counseling area of Dublin's website) is an important document in that it outlines Dublin School's mission, a description of the school community, and academic offerings and requirements. It also explains our marking system and the distribution of juniors' GPA and core course grades. The School Profile helps a college admission counselor place an applicant's performance in the context of his/her class and school and its academic offerings.

Résumés to share more personal information

A college résumé can be important to your application in some situations. A résumé provides the admission counselor with a concise personal profile, but it also acts as another sample of your ability to write, organize, and present yourself. The résumé can take on different goals. It can be general, outlining your academic achievements, extracurricular activities, and personal interests. It is your chance to neatly list your high school accomplishments. However, you should fill in everything that is required on the application itself, and if the résumé merely repeats what is already in the application, it is not necessary unless required. A résumé can also be specific to one area that is of serious interest to you, such as athletics, music, or theater. Even if you do not choose to include a résumé with your college application, the process of building it can be useful. Juniors will be assisted with drafting a résumé in their English class in May.

VII. Special Talents Athletics and the College Process

If you are interested in playing competitive sports in college or intend to pursue college athletic recruitment, there are some additional steps to be taken during the college process. The first step is to evaluate your abilities and potential. Be honest with yourself and ask yourself important questions such as, “How good is the program at the schools at which I am looking? Do they welcome all to the program or only those that they recruit? Will I get the amount of playing time with which I am satisfied?” Next, it is recommended that you:

- Talk to your coach and discuss programs that might be a good athletic fit. Ask if he/she will contact schools on your behalf after you have initiated contact. Discuss creating a video of your play.
- Complete the student athlete recruitment questionnaire for each school you are considering found in the athletic area of websites.
- Follow-up submission of the questionnaire with an email to the head coach and the assistant coach (see sample letter following).
- Create and share a video of highlights with coaches
- Communication should begin as early as the fall of junior year depending on the sport and division athletics you are pursuing. Division I and II NCAA teams have specific recruiting rules to adhere to during the process. Ms. Macy and your coach can assist you with the proper timeline, and detailed info can be found on the NCAA eligibility website.
- If you are pursuing Division I or II competition, you must be academically cleared through the NCAA Clearinghouse. Your core course GPA and test scores must meet NCAA approval. Register online with the NCAA Clearinghouse by the end of junior year.
- When/if you visit a campus, you can request to meet with the coach if they are on campus at the time of your visit. Division I and II have rules around the timing of official visits.

It is important that you inform Dublin’s College Office of your communications with college coaches and the role that athletic recruiting plays in your process. Keep in mind that final admission decisions are made by the admission committee, not the coaches. Contacting coaches can have a positive impact on your application, but it rarely guarantees anything. It is also important to make sure the school meets your academic needs above all else.

Examples of Questions for Student-Athletes to Ask

Regarding the Sports Program:

- How often do freshman play?
- What role do you see me playing on this team?
- How strong of a player would I be on your team?
- What are skills I need to work on as an athlete?
- How long have you been at the school?
- Do you redshirt freshman?
- Do you redshirt injured players?
- How many other recruits are on your list this year?
- How many other players do you have on the team at my position?
- Would you want me to play my position or have me switch my position?
- How many players are in your program?
- How many returning starters do you have?
- Could you describe the off-season training program and commitments?
- Do all of the members of the team travel to away games?
- How many students are on scholarship (DI and II only)?
- What is your in-season practice and conditioning schedule?
- How much financial support does this program receive from the college's athletic program? How much would I be responsible for?
- Can students "walk-on"?
- What are your goals for the program and your coaching philosophy?

Regarding Campus Life:

- Do athletes have separate housing?
- If athletes come to campus early for pre-season, where do they live?
- Do athletes have special dining hours or extended hours if late practices and games?
- Do athletes have to live on campus?
- Is it possible to study abroad as a student athlete?
- How easily can I involve myself in other extracurricular activities?
- Can I play another sport?

Regarding Academics:

- How do I pick my classes? Who helps me pick them?
- How often do students take summer classes to make up time from the academic year?
- Where do I get help if I have difficulty academically?
- Do professors understand if I have to miss class for a game?
- Does the coach keep tabs on the team members' academic performance?
- Does the team or athletic department offer tutoring or study tables?
- Do players in my sports program tend to graduate in four years?
- How often will I miss class because of my sports commitment?

Regarding Financial Aid:

- How many scholarships does your program offer (DI and II only)?
- If I am offered a scholarship, will that amount stay constant and/or be renewed?
- What costs does a scholarship to your college cover?
- Can I work while on campus?
- If an athlete gets hurt, what happens to the scholarship money?
- Is there any financial assistance for summer school?
- If the college doesn't provide merit/athletic scholarships, how does the financial aid office award financial aid?

Regarding the Admissions Process:

- Will you support me in the admission process?
- Has the admissions office seen my application materials and given any sort of feedback?
- Are there things that I can do to strengthen my application?
- How many other students are you supporting?
- Where do I fall on your list of recruits?
- How often does the admissions office listen to your coach suggestions?
- Will you support me in the admission office if I have not made a firm commitment?

Cover Letter to Coach

Dear Coach...:

I am writing to let you know of my interest in the lacrosse program at (college name). I am currently a junior boarding student at Dublin School in Dublin, New Hampshire. I have a ---GPA and follow a rigorous course schedule.

I have started as Center Midfield for the past two years on Dublin's varsity team. Last year I was co-captain of our team and was chosen to play in the Lakes Region All-star game at the end of the season. This past summer I attended Merestead Sports Camp for lacrosse and expect to return there again this upcoming summer. I also play for my local club (insert team name) during the summer.

I have submitted your recruiting questionnaire online and checked out your team's website. I would like to learn more about your program and how I might fit into it. I have included contact information for my high school coach, club coach, and high school college counselor below.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Your name
Street Address
City, State, Zip
Email
Cell

Holly Macy
Director of College Counseling
Dublin School
hmacy@dublinschool.org
(603)563-1244

Coach Name
Email
Phone Number

Cover Letter to Special Interest Person

Dear Professor...,

I am a junior at Dublin School in Dublin, New Hampshire. I have heard great things about the theater department at your school and have researched your program online. I have spent most of my extracurricular hours at Dublin School assisting in productions of all kinds and am looking for a college where I might continue my extensive involvement in technical crew. I am enclosing a résumé of work.

I will be visiting your campus in August and would like the opportunity to meet with you or someone else in your department. I look forward to hearing from you about your availability to meet with me during my visit.

Sincerely

Your name
Email
Cell

Art Portfolios for the College Application

College admissions offices have different requirements, but the following is universal:

College List: The art teacher will help students and parents develop a list of potential art programs as early as they would like. This should be done during the junior year.

Portfolio: The student works with the Dublin art teacher to produce artwork, usually over the course of at least two years, to complete an artistic portfolio. There have been students successfully completing work in their senior year alone, but this is a demanding approach. Helping students understand and meet the requirements of the portfolio are the responsibility of the art teacher.

Format: With very few exceptions colleges accept student portfolios in digital format online through a site called Slideroom. The Dublin School art teacher will work directly with students to shoot and upload portfolio work.

Note: Students who intend to apply to Cooper Union or RISD must inform the Dublin teacher in September of senior year as these schools have special requirements.

College Applications and Deadlines: A final college list will be created by the students, parents, college counselor and art teacher by early fall of senior year. It is then up to the student and college counselor to make sure college application and supporting material deadlines are met. Portfolio deadlines must be determined as well (they vary from January to March and are usually separate from application deadlines.) The art teacher will make sure the student has his/her portfolio shot and ready to meet all portfolio deadlines.

So, my kid wants to be an artist, what do I do now?

By Earl Schofield, Visual Arts

Don't panic!

No, really don't panic, it will be okay.

Frequently Asked Questions

Number 1 is almost always, so how will they support themselves?

Well, worst case scenario first: The answer is that they will get a job like everybody else. Yes, it is true, artists don't make much money, you may as well say you want to be a rock star, as say you want to be a famous artist. Don't go to art school if that is what you are interested in. However, artists abound in our society; they just usually do something else to support themselves.

So why would I let them go to art school?

Because they can still go on to be very happy, well educated, and well adjusted people who love their life's work.

So, again, what will they do to support themselves?

I have to answer this with another question, what do you think they would do with an English, History, Communication, Psychology or Biology degree? An English degree will look no better than a B.F.A. when they interview for that sales or administration job. In addition to being eligible for all the jobs people with these other degrees will be eligible for, there are careers in Art Education, Art Therapy, Graphic Design, Architectural Rendering, Architecture, Interior Design, Fashion Design, Marketing, Advertising, Television and Movie production, Product Design, Package Design, Website Design, Illustration (medical, literary, advertising, etc), Museum work and Journalism to name a few. Your student may wish to pursue a fine art degree or pursue a specialized degree in one of these fields.

But shouldn't they have something to fall back on?

Sure, so should we all, right? But don't get so hung up on the "fall back" that you undercut your child's attempts to do the best they can do to get the best support they can get doing what they love. They will do better at what they love than what they are strong-armed into. But here is more practical advice: if they are sculptors, make sure they get an A in welding and wood shop. If you can use tools, you can work with those tools. No matter what they do, learn everything possible about computers. Web design and others are a great "fall back." Get an education degree as well. Go to school for five instead of four years and get two degrees: one in Fine Art, Graphic Design, Art History, etc, the other in Art Education. Most artists who "make it" are also teachers. The local art center, school or camp is almost always looking for someone to teach people arts and crafts, children through elderly. Learn how to use your camera too. Making the rent shooting weddings and other events is yet another way to go. Everybody you work with is happy, they give you free food while you work, you get lots of free time, and you make a bundle. Life could be worse.

Studying Art in college doesn't necessarily mean, Fine Art. The B.F.A. can be earned in Graphic Design and dozens of other subspecialties. We have past Dublin students who

are presently studying Fine Art at Carnegie Mellon, Art Education at Mass Art, and Industrial Design specializing in automotive design in London.

But I want them to have a “full” education; I don’t want them to be so “specialized.” I want them to have “options.”

Not being specialized probably makes them less prepared for life on their own after college not more. Should your child decide a degree in Art isn’t the way to go, transferring to another school is easy. It won’t be any harder transferring from art school to a university than it is from a university to an art school. They will have a “full” education. Studying Art involves Psychology, Political Science, Physical Science, Philosophy, Mathematics, Writing/English and History. Your student will study a full range of academic subjects. They have to! It is the law. They are subject to the same oversight as other majors.

What the heck is a B.F.A. anyway?

This is important. A B.F.A. is a Bachelor of Fine Arts. It is different from a B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) in Visual Art. The B.F.A. offers more focus and more time developing skills in the studio. The B.A. is very general, not very in depth, and fairly useless comparatively. It also means a student may not study art in a studio until they are a junior in college- and then not as rigorously or with the same intensity. Both degrees require “the basics” of other academic degrees but the B.F.A. makes more connections to how the student will actually apply what they learn in their major.

But I want them to be exposed to all different people, different majors.

Well, most “art schools” are in major cities and “art schools” make use of that. Museum access, studio access, gallery access, availability of business internships, these all get your students out there. Also, most are part of consortiums allowing cross registration and semesters abroad, both of which I highly encourage. So, it will be tough for your student not to be exposed to a broad spectrum of people. Nonetheless, there are many colleges and universities that offer a wonderful array of art majors, but make sure the institution offers the B.F.A. and that you visit the facilities. Space and equipment are pretty big factor for choosing a school. An art career doesn’t necessarily mean “art school”.

Will they be challenged enough academically?

Yes, well, maybe. Art school does demand more motivation and drive than other pursuits. The self-motivated learner will find plenty of challenge and cross registration allows for more options. The only caveat to my “yes” is that they will be in “multi-level” classes sometimes. If your child is intellectually gifted, we will help find the right school. RISD for example demands very high academic standards for admission and is connected to Brown University. But trust me when I say that there are some brilliant minds in art school faculty and classes.

But isn’t art school kind of like a trade school?

No way! There are some schools that I would describe that way, yes, but your student won’t be applying to them. Art schools today and people in art careers are best described as “scholars with dirty fingernails.’ They use clay and blow torches, *and* computers to express sophisticated thought and wrestle with ideas and concepts that will make the average Computer Science major weep!

Why waste such good grades on art school?

See above. The smarter and more hardworking your kid is, the farther they will develop.

How much do grades count for art students?

There is really nothing but good news when it comes to this question and the next. After the Portfolio, a student's high school grades are the next most important criteria. Art schools want people to graduate (they make more money that way!). They know that grades are an indication of how self disciplined, how motivated, how well organized, how committed, how curious, and of course how smart your student is. The better the grades, the better a student's chances of admission and receiving a good financial aid package. That being said, low math grades will not keep you out of art school. Nor will a bad year and neither will a learning disability. People with challenges in some of these areas are some of the first people to be part of the "multiple intelligence theory" of Harvard's Howard Gardner. They understand and will take all into consideration.

Okay, so now what?

Relax. Take your time. Give us a call. I can help. I will listen. I am not out to "recruit" but I am out to inform. I tell it straight, the good and the bad, to our students. I push them and I test them. I tell them that they had better be ready to work and to fight, if this is what they want to do. And more than anything, I preach self-discipline and a strong work ethic. Tenacity is a very important attribute. Desire is not enough. If they get past all that and still want to follow this path, then I will do all I can to help, even defend them against their parent's fears and doubts. That is what I expect from my children's teachers.

Don't get me wrong; you **should** worry about your kids, just not all that much more than anybody else's kids.

Applying to Music Programs

The College Music Major: Things to do in High School to Prepare

To gain admission into the music department of a college, you will have to demonstrate passion, achievement, potential, and commitment to the study of music. There are a number of requirements for which you need to prepare, and the market is always competitive. There are always very few spots in these professional degree programs and the body of applicants is extraordinarily talented and passionate. That said, there is no room for unpreparedness and for mistakes with respect to getting things done on time and to the right place.

Here are basic pieces of advice on how to prepare for college music during your high school career:

- **Enroll in Music Courses:** The more music classes you take, the more versed and well-rounded you become. Acquire basic music theory knowledge/skills.
- **Study Privately:** Your private instructor should be qualified to teach a serious young musician. An ideal pre-college teacher has: A degree in music (at least a Bachelor's). Experience in preparing college-bound musicians, Experience as an outstanding/professional performer.
- **Know Your Music:** Study the music that you learn to play. Figure out its form, figure out the chord progressions and cadences, translate the text if it is a vocal piece in a foreign language, read about the context of the piece. If you are a singer, study a foreign language, particularly French, German, and Italian. Compare the interpretations of the piece as performed on different recordings. Memorize your piece not only physically by playing it, but also *in your mind* away from your instrument or voice.
- **Listen to Music:** Serious young musicians often do everything to advance themselves except listen to music! The more you listen to music, the more prepared your ears will be for the challenges of college level work in music. Listen to a wide variety of great music from classical to jazz to ethnic to folk to various popular styles. Listen to different recordings of the same piece. Listen not only to recorded music, but also to music *live* in a concert hall. Listen to different genres of music (solo, chorus, concerto, symphony, percussion ensemble, etc.). The more you listen, the more discerning you will become.
- **Learn Music Technology:** Familiarity with computer notation programs is beneficial. The most common are Finale and Sibelius, which are stand-alone notation programs, and Logic, which includes notation as part of a larger platform with MIDI and digital audio. Some companies offer less-expensive starter versions or educational discounts. PC-based music technology is not limited to notation; MIDI, digital audio recording and editing programs are other powerful tools. Familiarity with technology is extremely valuable to anyone aspiring to a career in music.
- **Play with Other People:** The more you perform, the easier and more worthwhile the experience becomes over time. Students who attend high schools with strong performance ensembles enjoy tremendous learning opportunities. Popular music groups such as rock or pep bands, while valid and fun, seldom challenge musicians with regards to traditional ensemble skills (music reading, blending, tuning and balancing, and following a conductor). Participate and enjoy -- but don't expect these groups to substitute for literature-based ensembles.
- **Sing:** Singing is the most basic form of musical expression. All music majors are required to sing extensively. Take advantage of every chance to work on your voice, and more importantly, your ear.
- **Play Piano:** Like singing, piano playing is required of all college music majors. If you started on piano but switched to a different instrument, pull out your old books and brush up. If you have never played before, start as soon as you can.

- **Research Music Programs:** Every college music program is unique and most have their own admissions requirements. The sooner you research the programs that are out there, the easier it will be for you to prepare for and to streamline the audition process.

General Requirements for Admissions (*Variations exist in requirements by school, by program, by instrument*):

- Audition (live or pre-screening)
- Music Resume (detailing high school career with emphasis on accomplishments in music and arts and listing of repertoire)
- Music Teacher Recommendation (high school teacher, private lessons instructors)
- Music College Supplemental Application (separate, usually in addition to the college application)
- Theory Proficiency/Placement Exam
- Sight-Reading Exam

Applying to Theater and Dance Programs

By Jenny Foreman, Chair of the Arts Department

Dance/theater program options

Auditioning for dance and theater BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts)/Conservatory programs is an exciting and competitive process. The incoming first year classes are small (in some cases no more than 20 students) and the applicant pools are large. Just like a real world audition experience, no amount of talent, preparation, and passion can guarantee you a spot. Each school has its own method for creating the “ideal freshman class” – some are driven by creating a well-rounded and diverse ensemble, others value raw talent over training, others are looking for professional experience. The point is, all you can do is prepare well, do your best, and have fun in the process. It is a chance for you to perform – and you are pursuing a degree in performance because you love it!

That said, have some schools on your list that are not audition-driven, but instead have strong arts programs and opportunities. Many liberal arts schools have very good departments offering a BA degree, other schools have strong club opportunities. You may even prefer to pursue this kind of degree. BA programs often have fewer restrictions on when you can start performing on stage, and give you more ability to craft your own program or explore interdisciplinary studies. Talk to theater and dance majors at schools you are interested in and get an idea about the student experience in each setting.

While BFA programs sometimes set their students up with connections that give them an advantage going out into the “real world,” professionals working in dance and theater are not all from conservatory programs, so keep following your passion and work hard to keep performance a part of your life no matter where you end up for college.

Recommendations leading up to the college process:

Take dance, music, and acting classes!

Perform as much as possible!

Participate in summer programs: these will give you more of an idea of the rigor and pace of a BFA program, and will help you make connections with other like-minded students and make connections with faculty at various schools.

Practice your audition material on your own, with Ms. Foreman and in front of small groups in advance of the audition process. You will be nervous – and that is good! It is a sign that you care! – but the more comfortable you are with the process of walking into a room and giving it your all, the better!

Auditions

In general, plan to spend a lot of time preparing for your auditions. This is not a time to be spontaneous or rely on the thrill of the moment to produce your best performance. You want to be able to perform the pieces that comprise each audition in your sleep! I am happy to help you select and rehearse your pieces. I recommend having a chart of all of your school requirements and audition dates ready to share with me during the month of August, and ideally have all repertory chosen before the start of the Fall trimester, or definitely by the end of September. We should meet weekly to work on material and more frequently leading up to audition dates. If possible, I am also happy to meet over the summer months between Junior and Senior year.

You will also need headshots and resumes. These should be professionally done photographs and follow a format for a performance resume (different than a work resume). Most programs will supply samples and they are readily available if you do a Google search. Have me proofread your resume before submitting – and be thorough in cataloging the extent of your performance experience and training.

Aim to sign up for your audition slots as soon as they become available. They fill up quickly. And check the calendar to make sure you know where they land in relation to the Dublin School year. You do not, for example, want to be scheduled for an audition the weekend of the Winter Musical – it is important for you to keep your performance commitments at school during this process.

Previous performance footage:

Some schools will accept this as a supplement to the regular application materials. And this is excellent to include, especially in supplements for BA programs that do not require an audition. Choose only the best quality work, however, and EXCERPT. A supplemental reel of 3-5 minutes is plenty. If schools do not accept an arts supplement you may still make a video compilation and upload it to Vimeo or YouTube and include the link in the “Additional Information” section of the common application.

Theater audition general requirements:

1-2 monologues (1-3 minutes in length), some schools ask for two contrasting monologues, some ask for a classical and a contemporary monologue. It is important to know the lengths and requirements for each school. It is also advantageous to look for monologues for characters you are likely to play, and characters that are in their teens to twenties.

1-2 songs (either 16 or 32 bar cuts), again it is important to know the exact criteria for each school -- some want an up-tempo and a ballad, some want a song from a show prior to 1965 and a contemporary song, some are more general: “contrasting” pieces

Dance audition: most musical theater programs will teach a short combination and ask you to perform it (video submissions often provide a combination for you to learn off of a video)

Generally speaking, unless you are going to a live audition, you will use these same criteria for preparing a video submission. Whether auditioning live or in person you should look your best for an audition. It is the program administrators’ way of getting to know you both as an individual and as a performer, so you want to present your best work with confidence, passion, and professionalism.

A detail to look out for: some schools ask that you NOT perform certain repertoire (Sondheim, for instance is often on the “no sing” list). There are good reasons for this, so please honor the school’s request!

Dance audition general requirements:

For live auditions, most dance programs require that you take a ballet class and some will also require learning phrases or taking a second class in another style as well. Some programs will ask you to present a short 1-3 minute solo of your own choreography or another's. Pay close attention to the requirements for attire for auditions. Some schools will have a specific ensemble they want you to wear (black leotard and pink tights, for instance) and others will be more relaxed about it. Question what this might say about the values of the program and how that fits with your aspirations.

Video submissions are by far less desirable. It is more difficult to show physicality and expression in a straight-shot video. Criteria for video submission are often more detailed: they will outline particular barre or center combinations they want you to perform, as well as travelling and fall/recovery movements. Some programs may also want specific still shots, such as an arabesque.

I am here to support you and cheer you on – and to push you to get better and more comfortable with your material. Please keep in close communication with me during this exciting process!

VIII. Learning Differences and the College Process

Levels of Support

The first question to consider when entering the college process is, “What level of support am I looking for in my college?” There are three main types of programs:

1. Comprehensive Program

- Full academic support system with students working with LD specialists
- Students have a scheduled time to work with specialist
- Often a separate application process and extra fees for the program

Examples:

University of Arizona SALT program

Beacon College, FL

Campbell U, NC

UConn

College of Wooster, OH

Curry College PAL Program, MA

Dean College, MA

U of Denver

Guilford College- Student Success Program, NC

Hofstra U, NY

Landmark College, VT

Lynn University, FL

McDaniel College- PASS and MAP Programs, MD

Marist College, NY

Syracuse University, NY

2. Coordinated LD Services

- College has some LD Services/Center
- Tutors available on part-time/drop-in basis
- No fee
- Student must be self-advocate because no required meetings

3. ADA Accommodations only

- Student must go to disabilities office at college to get basic accommodations based on documented need
- No fee

Questions when looking at schools

- What are the curriculum requirements?
- What type of support services is provided?
- Where are the services available? Ask to see the learning center
- Is there a stigma attached to these services?
- Are professors sensitized to student's problems?
- What types of modifications are made in regular course programs? (recording lectures, extra time, access to professor's notes...)
- How many hours of support service are available each week?
- If tutoring is available, who does it? Trained staff?
- How do language waivers affect admissibility? What language requirements are there at the college or university for my student with a document language waiver?

Documentation/Disclosure:

- Need current testing (within last three years)
- ADA versus IEP, post-secondary schools are not responsible for paying for testing; it is required that the student provide appropriate testing
- Not required to disclose LD to colleges and if student is 18, it is usually the student who must disclose
- Can disclose at the time of the application if helps provide a context for grade report*
- Can disclose at the time of acceptance at which time information should be submitted to the ADA/Disability Office
- The College Counseling Office will not disclose any information regarding an LD unless the applicant and parents have agreed

Language Waivers:

In our experience, students with documented language waivers who decide not to participate in a language during high school may find that this impacts the college application process. While some colleges have no foreign language requirements for admission, for instance, others do. Of the schools that have foreign language requirements for admission, some will waive this requirement with proper documentation. Others, however, may explicitly declare that a student's application will be weakened without any language study during high school. Additionally, it is

important to be informed of the core graduation requirements at the colleges or universities being considered and whether a documented language waiver can be applied to these requirements.

We encourage you to speak with the Learning Skills Department and the College Counselor as your student selects their high school courses. The process will be unique for each student, and we will do our best to offer appropriate guidance.

It can be helpful for an applicant with an LD to write a brief, supplemental essay of self-disclosure to be included in the application explaining what obstacles she/he has faced and overcome. Consider keeping the main college essay to a topic that helps the reader get an inside look at the applicant's personality, views or character.

IX. Financial Aid and Scholarships

Questions to Ask When Visiting a College

- *Are you “need-blind” in your admission policy?* A college that is “need-blind” makes admissions decisions without regard to the student’s ability to pay. Financial circumstances are not reviewed by the college until after an admission decision is reached. Some colleges, when considering students with equal academic records, will give preference to the student who is able to pay. This practice is “need-aware” or “need-conscious.” You should ask what the policy is for each school you are considering.
- *Do you meet 100% of demonstrated need?* To be eligible for financial aid, families complete several forms (see below) and a determination is made regarding a family’s economic need. Some schools meet 100% of your demonstrated need with an aid package that includes grants (scholarships), student loans, and work-study. Other schools do not meet full need. This is called “gapping.” Families, not schools, are responsible for finding alternative ways to finance the “gap.”
- *Does your school offer need-based aid, merit aid, or both?*
- *How does your office determine who is eligible for merit aid?*
- *What is your “packaging policy?”* Most schools give an aid package that includes grant money (scholarship), loans, and/or work-study. Ask the following questions:
 - In general, what percentage of an aid package from your college is grant versus self-help (loans, work-study)?
 - How does an aid package change over four years?
 - Do you give any merit-based aid (scholarships for students with high academic records)?
 - How many hours per week are work-study students expected to work?

- *What is your policy regarding outside scholarships?* Some schools deduct money earned in outside scholarships from your financial aid package. Some schools reduce your loan burden, but other schools reduce your grant money. Reducing the loan would be more favorable to you!
- *What is the policy with regard to non-custodial parents and step-parents? Are they expected to contribute if financially able? Do they need to disclose their finances?*
- *How much indebtedness can I expect after four years?*
- *Are there any tuition payment plans that will allow me and my parents to spread out our payments over a period of months?*

Tips

- Communicate within your family and the College Office to make sure your list of colleges includes an appropriate range of admissibility and affordability
- Remember that often the private, costlier colleges have better financial aid package awards.
- Avoid scholarship or financial aid search services that charge fees. Use the websites listed in the bibliography.
- You can schedule to speak with a financial aid officer at schools so that you can ask specific questions about their financial aid programs.
- Attend the Financial Aid Workshop offered during Family Weekend at Dublin School.
- Use the Net Price Calculator (NPC) on each school's website to get an estimate of that school's potential financial aid package for your student, which will show federal and institutional aid
- Use the FAFSA4caster tool to get an estimate of your federal student aid (<https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/estimate>)

Forms

Determine the types of forms that are required for each of the schools to which you are applying and make note of the filing deadlines. **Deadlines for financial aid forms are often different from admission deadlines.** All aid applicants and their parents/guardians **must file the FAFSA.** Some schools also require applicants to file the CSS/PROFILE.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

All colleges require this form. It determines your eligibility for all forms of federal aid and the state scholarship program. It is most advisable to fill out the FAFSA on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA is available online on October 1st each year.

Note: The Federal Government is redesigning the FAFSA for the coming year. The release date of the new FAFSA is December 2023. This will have an impact on the timeline of the awarding of early decision financial aid packages. Check with a school's aid website for details around the way the institution will handle this situation.

CSS/PROFILE

Many private colleges require this form. It is a more comprehensive form than the FAFSA, and allows a family to show their financial situation with more depth. For a complete listing of the colleges that accept the CSS/PROFILE and to fill-out the form on-line, go to www.collegeboard.com. There is a fee for this service. This form should be filed at least four weeks prior to any financial aid deadlines. It is available online beginning in October. In the case of divorced parents, both the custodial and non-custodial parents submit information. If the non-custodial parent is not able or unwilling to submit their financial information, an appeal may be made to have this requirement waived. This involves getting a third-party letter of support, so planning ahead to complete this step is important.

In order to complete the FAFSA and/or CSS/PROFILE, you will need some or all of the following information:

- Completed or estimated tax forms
- W-2 Forms and other records of money earned (or estimates of earnings)
- Records of untaxed income such as welfare, social security, or veteran's benefits
- Current bank statements
- Business (farm) records
- Records of stocks, bonds, other investments
- Student's driver's license and social security card

MERIT AID

Many schools award merit aid in addition to financial aid. Most merit aid will be automatically awarded to eligible students at the time of admission without any required forms or applications. Academic merit aid is typically based on a student's GPA and test scores. Additional merit aid may be awarded for talents (visual and performing arts, athletics for Division I or II only, etc.) or extracurricular involvements (leadership, community service, etc.). In some cases, a student must submit a portfolio of work to earn merit aid. It is best to inquire at each school about what they offer and how students become eligible.

PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS

You can help fund your college expenses through private scholarships. Most private scholarships are in the range of \$1000-\$5000. Some of the best private scholarships are those offered in your local area. Towns, businesses, or community organizations often offer scholarships. If you are a boarding student, you can ask your local high school guidance office for any information they have about local scholarships in your area.

There are also many websites that help you search for national or state offered scholarships. (See appendix)

It is important to understand whether private scholarship funds will impact your financial aid award at your college. Some subtract from the institutional aid you may have been given. It is best to ask your college how they handle private scholarships. It is also important to understand if the private scholarship is for one year only and/or has requirements for keeping it over your four years.

X. Final Thoughts & Helpful Tips

- Communicate regularly with the College Office and your parents.
- Create a method of organization that will work for you throughout the process. Have a place to store passwords for various sites. Make folders in your email for each school.
- Save everything- be sure to print out a copy or save a pdf of all of your on-line applications, essays, financial aid forms.
- Fill-out your applications, test registrations, etc. the same way every time- do not use nicknames and choose to either include or exclude your middle initial.
- Dublin School's code is: 300145.
- Use your Naviance Student account and keep it current with your most recent College List. Your account will act as an organizer for upcoming deadlines.
- Submit things ahead of deadlines whenever possible. It takes college admission offices time to process application material and can take a couple of weeks for the College Board and ACT to send out official score reports.
- Read over application and financial aid requirements for each school carefully. Check for supplemental essay requirements.
- Treat each application as if that school were your first choice. Many schools pay attention to a student's level of interest.
- If you have a first-choice school and you are not electing to apply ED, share this with Ms. Macy to learn about how to communicate that to the admission office.
- If you can not visit a school due to distance, you may be able to access virtual admission events and tours as well as schedule a virtual interview.
- Most admission office's assign a counselor to work with NH applicants. Use this person as a resource to go to with questions or needs. They will be your advocate throughout the admission process.

XI. Resources: Books and Websites

The College Search and Data

<https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>

Compare stats such as retention rates, admission rates, average costs per income level, etc.

Common Data Set

Google search the name of a school and Common Data Set to access the school's report. Within the report you can scroll to find stats such as what academic units are required for admission and what factors are most important in the admission review (including demonstrated interest)

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

Allows you to compare schools or search for comparable schools

<https://www.collegekickstart.com/>

Has lists on topics such as schools that offer interviews, admission stats, etc.

<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>

<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

www.mycollegeoptions.com

www.collegeweeklive.com

www.cappex.com

www.zinch.com

www.collegeprowler.com

www.unigo.com

www.collegecountdown.com

Objective college reference books (fact-based profiles of schools):

Barron's Profiles of American Colleges. Happaugue, NY: Barron's Educational Series.

The College Handbook. New York, NY: The College Board.

Peterson Competitive Colleges. Princeton, NJ: Peterson's Guides.

Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges. Princeton, NJ: Peterson's Guides.

Kravetz, Marybeth and Imy Wax. *The K & W Guide to Colleges for the Learning Disabled*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Subjective college guidebooks (anecdotal commentary):

Fiske, Edward B. *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*. New York, NY: Times Books.

Yale Daily News. *The Insider Guide to the Colleges*. New York, NY: St. Martin's

Choosing the Right College. Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute.

Valuable Perspectives:

Bruni, Frank. *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Become*. New York, NY: Grand Central Publishing.

Lyons, Lynn. *Anxious Kids Anxious Parents*. Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications Inc.

Mayher, Bill. *The College Admissions Mystique*. New York, NY: Noonday Press.

Pope, Loren. *Colleges That Change Lives*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Pope, Loren. *Looking Beyond the Ivy League: Finding the College That is Right for You*. New York, NY: Viking Penguin.

Standardized Testing/Test Preparation

www.collegeboard.com (PSAT, SAT, AP)
www.act.org (ACT)
www.ets.org (TOEFL)
Khan Academy free test prep online
Revolution Prep courses and individual tutoring
<https://www.revolutionprep.com/partners/3566/>

Financial Aid

www.fafsa.ed.gov
www.collegeboard.com (for CSS Profile)
www.finaid.org
www.ed.gov/studentaid
www.finaid.org/nasfaa
www.fastweb.com
www.collegeaidcalculator.com
www.collegescorecard.com
<http://finaidnav.com> (a fee-based consulting group that can assist families in maximizing aid and scholarship, owned by a Dublin School alumnus)

Scholarships

www.goingmerry.com
www.fastweb.com
www.cappex.com
<https://myscholly.com/>
<http://weirdscholarships.com/>
Hispanic Scholarship Fund <https://www.hsf.net/>
www.scholarships.com
www.scholasphere.com
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>
NH Residents: New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
<https://www.nhcf.org/how-can-we-help-you/apply-for-a-scholarship/>
Dublin Residents: Dublin Community Foundation and Trustees of the Trust Fund

Gap Year

www.gooverseas.com
www.usagapyearfairs.org
www.teenlife.com
www.gapyearassociation.org gap year consultants