

Class of 2026 College Planning Part 1

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Step 1: Gather Data



What do colleges look for in an applicant?

- *National Association of College Admissions Counseling (NACAC)*
 - Factors in College Admissions

Resources

[College Planning & Resource Guide](#): summary of information, resources and tasks for students and families

[Bexley City Schools Calendar](#): find opportunities to visit schools during school holidays

[SchoolLinks](#): school and career research, records, unofficial transcript

[NACAC](#): student and family resources

Standardized Testing

- [PSAT Score Report](#): predictive value on the SAT (scores available now)
- *ACT* & *SAT* [Score Conversion Chart](#)
- School-provided *ACT* for all juniors: late February / early March
- [ACT Enhancements](#)

ACT	SAT
Test Dates	Test Dates
Test Prep Resources	Test Prep Resources

Step 2: Cost Considerations

The Basics of Financial Aid

- Student Aid Index (SAI)
- Cost of Attendance (COA) or “sticker price”
- $\text{Cost of Attendance} - \text{Student Aid Index} = \text{Demonstrated Need}$
- The ultimate goal of financial aid is to finance the FULL demonstrated need cost, which can be supported by: merit scholarships, grants, loans, etc.
- The SAI does not change based on the school cost, but the Demonstrated Need amount does change

Estimating College Cost

- Understand your [estimated Federal Financial Aid](#) amount (SAI)
- Financial Aid is determined by two-years prior. Meaning, financial aid for a student's freshman year is determined by the 2024 tax year.
 - Example: Harvard [Financial Aid Fact Sheet](#)

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- What is the FAFSA?
- Scheduled to be available on or before December 1
- During 23-24, the FAFSA process underwent significant changes

College Cost Basics

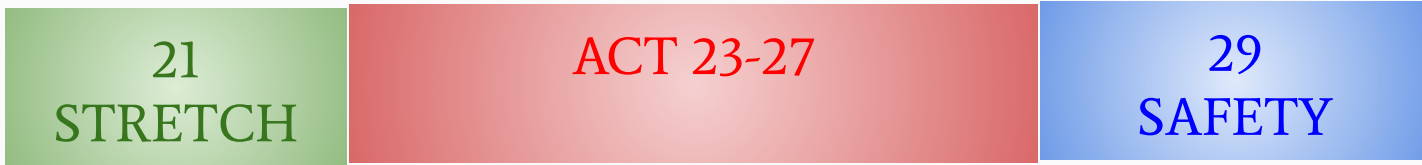
Need Based Aid

- Based on financial need (*FAFSA*)
- Based on the [CSS Profile](#)
- Required to reapply each year
- Recent change: student aid index (SAI) splitting need, claiming children on taxes for divorced parents

Merit Aid

- Money awarded based on achievement, talent or other criteria
- Examples: academics, athletics, music, leadership, etc.

Merit Aid: Middle 50% Range: Middle 50 range changes for EVERY COLLEGE!



Merit Scholarship Money

Merit Aid

- Typically, admission application is the application for merit aid
- Some colleges may have additional merit awards requiring an additional application
- Often, the most merit aid awarded will come from your individual safety school(s)
- Funds are often renewable for 4 years

Resources: learning & planning

- [Podcast](#): *College Affordability? Ignore the Sticker Price*
 - Season 4, episode 9
- [The Financial Aid Handbook](#)

Estimating College Cost

- [MyinTuition](#) College Cost Estimator
- Federal law requires colleges to provide a cost estimator on their website

College Affordability Options

- [Berea College](#) (KY) : tuition free work college
- [Metropolitan College](#) at the *University of Louisville*: UPS 3rd shift with tuition benefits
- [UPS Earn & Learn Program](#): \$5,250 / year (max of \$25,000)
- [Columbus State Preferred Pathways Partners](#): pay less / credit hour, guaranteed admission to a partner school
- *Ohio National Guard*: Full tuition for two or four-year public schools
- [Chipotle Education Benefits](#)
- [Starbucks Education](#): Free online courses through *Arizona State University*

Step 3: Explore Schools

Identify Must Haves, Likes and Dislikes

- Academic Fit
- Career Interest(s)
- Personal Preferences

Envision What College Might Look Like...

- Is it here...
- Small teacher-to-student ratio
- Easier access to professors
- More collaborative



Envision What College Might Look Like...

- Or maybe here...
- Greater independence
- Attendance might be optional
(not recommended to skip class)



Envision What College Might Look Like...

- Or maybe here...
- Large athletic presence
- Tradition school spirit and engagement



Envision What College Might Look Like...

- Or maybe here...
- More studious atmosphere, priority focus on academics



Envision What College Might Look Like...

- Or maybe here...
- Social activism



Career Interests: Find your “playground”

[Clemson University Research Facilities](#)

[Belmont University College of Entertainment & Music Business](#)

[Berry College: Specified four-year guided experience](#)

[Xavier University: Fifth Third Trading Center](#)

[University of Florida Hurricane Research Wind Machine](#)

[Ohio University Exploratory Majors](#)

[Best Colleges for Undecided Majors](#)

Personal Needs, Supports & Preferences

[The Marshall University Help Program](#) (ADHD and related disorders)

[The University of Arizona SALT Center](#) (learning and attention)

Campus Visits: Start Local

- Visit Ohio State University before visiting University of Texas
- Visit University of Cincinnati before visiting University of Vermont
- Visit University of Dayton before visiting High Point University
- Visit Ohio University before visiting Clemson University

Small campus & city, 50 miles from a large city



If you like the College of Wooster...check out

- Lake Forest College (near Chicago)
- Goucher College (outside Baltimore)
- Rhodes College (Memphis, TN)
- Denison University (Granville, OH)
- Providence College (Providence, RI)
- American University (Washington D.C.)



Large research university in a large city.

If you like The University of Cincinnati...

- Ohio State University
- University of Georgia
- University of Kentucky
- University of Missouri, Columbia
- University of South Carolina
- University of Vermont





Small campus located in a suburb with direct access to a city.

If you like John Carroll University...

- Capital University
- Trinity College (CT)
- Haverford College
- Swarthmore College
- Willamette University



Larger public university located in a college town, 45 minutes from a city.

If you like Miami University...check out

- Ohio University
- Indiana University
- Purdue University
- Penn State University
- University of Colorado, Boulder
- West Virginia University



Small, liberal arts college town with a city 40 miles away

If you like DePauw...

- Centre College (Danville, KY)
- Grinnell College (Grinnell, IA)
- Earlham College (Richmond, IN)
- Allegheny College (Allegheny, PA)
- SEWANEE: University of the South (Sewanee, TN)
- Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT
- Kenyon College

What's Next...

- Grades: perform your best, stay on track for graduation
- Continue to research schools
- Build a list of schools
- Meet with your school counselor (mid-January / early February)

Junior College Night Part 2: January 16, 2025