

Junior STAR Conference



2025-2026

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JUNIOR YEAR TIMELINE

Important dates, events and reminders

JANUARY 2026

- 5 Senior course info handed out
- 9 Registration deadline for February 14 ACT (optional)
- 12 Senior course info due
- 14-16 1st semester finals
- 19 ACT Prep course at OHS

This month:

- Review your high school coursework for senior year. Keep in mind that colleges look for the following:
 - **Rigorous coursework**
 - **Strong GPA**
 - **Competitive ACT score**
 - Involvement in extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, volunteer work, or church involvement
- Community involvement

FEBRUARY 2026

- 14 ACT test date (optional)

This month:

- Prepare for the March 10 ACT
- If interested in the ROTC or military academies, contact your OHS counselor
- Visit Xello for career and college information (access through PowerSchool)
- Visit the Student Services page on the OHS website for up-to-date career and college information
- Use your practice ACT results from Sept. to help focus your studying
- Create an initial list of colleges to contact for additional information. Find colleges that meet your needs. Consider fields of study, cost, location & size

MARCH 2026

- 1 ECCP/SCN/CNA/Youth Apprenticeship applications due
- 3 Take the ASVAB if interested in the military
- 6 Registration deadline for the April 11 ACT (optional)
- 10 **Required ACT+Writing at OHS**

This month:

- Meet with admissions representatives visiting OHS
- Contact colleges of interest for a scheduled visit. Visits during the school year allow you to see the campus in action
- Prepare for April ACT, if needed

APRIL 2026

- 11 ACT test date (if needed)

This month:

- Meet with admissions representatives visiting OHS
- Prepare for AP exams, if applicable
- Visit college campuses

MAY 2026

- 1 Deadline to complete UW Direct Admit opt-in registration
- 8 Registration deadline for June 13 ACT, if needed

This month:

- Take AP exams, if applicable
- Update resume/portfolio. Record all accomplishments, involvements and work experience over past 3 years
- Prepare for the June ACT, if needed
- Meet with admissions representatives visiting OHS
- Continue scheduling appointments to visit colleges (see handouts)

JUNE 2026

- 5 Registration deadline for July 11 ACT, if needed
- 13 ACT test date, if needed

This month:

- Volunteer or obtain a summer job that may be related to your career interests
- If possible, save money to pay for college costs
- Continue to visit colleges (see handouts)
- Research scholarships through the OHS newsletter, your school counselor, the district website, civic, community, and church organizations, and websites such as fastweb.com

JULY 2026

- 11 ACT test date, if needed
- 31 UW Direct Admit offers begin arriving through student email

AUGUST 2026

- 1 UW System begins accepting applications through traditional process

This month:

- Stay involved! Work, job shadow, continue to read a variety of books, and refresh your math skills
- Review career plans and the colleges you've looked at. Decide which colleges are a good match for you
- Research college websites that you have an interest in and review academic requirements needed for college programs
- Request college catalog and admissions information
- If you have not done so, visit your schools of interest
- Follow up on your "to do" list

SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE

Important dates, events and reminders

SEPTEMBER 2026

5 ACT test date (if needed)

TBA Attend Senior Student/
Parent Night at OHS

This month:

- Meet with admissions representatives visiting OHS
- Register for Oct. ACT, if needed
- Narrow college search to 3-5 schools
- Keep track of all college deadlines
- Pick up a Letter of Recommendation Request sheet *if* you need a "LOR"
- Begin submitting college admissions applications
- Apply for scholarship opportunities posted in Freddy's Footnotes and the OHS website
- Use assessment data results from junior year to guide studying

OCTOBER 2026

1 ECCP/SCN/CNA/Youth

Apprenticeship applications due

24 ACT test date (if needed)

This month:

- Register for a student and parent FSA ID for the FAFSA (fsaid.ed.gov)
- Complete the Free Application For Student Aid (FAFSA.ed.gov) by your college(s) deadline
- Continue to meet with admissions representatives visiting OHS
- Watch for scholarship opportunities posted in Freddy's Footnotes and OHS website

- Continue working on college applications. Have your teachers or counselor look over your college application essays
- Oct. through Dec.: Apply for and submit housing deposits at colleges that have accepted you
- Males who are 18 years old are required to register with Selective Service at www.sss.gov.
- Attend cap and gown meeting during school
- Attend College Goal Wisconsin for help on the FAFSA

NOVEMBER 2026

This month:

- Register for 2027 AP testing
- Complete your college applications by Thanksgiving
- Review your Student Aid Report (SAR) and report any errors
- Continue to work on scholarship essays and applications. Watch deadlines. Ask colleges about financial aid and scholarships

DECEMBER 2026

5 ACT test date, if needed

This month:

- Continue to work on scholarships

JANUARY 2027

This month:

- Attend the local scholarship meeting at OHS during school

FEBRUARY 2027

1 Register for college placement exam (if applicable)

This month:

- Be sure all necessary materials have been sent to your chosen colleges
- Don't get senioritis! Colleges **will** rescind admission for poor grades

MARCH 2027

- Sign up for college registration/orientation
- File for tuition reciprocity if attending a MN school

APRIL 2027

This month:

- Continue to work hard at keeping your grades up. Your last semester can make an impact on your GPA and class rank

MAY 2027

1 Deadline for enrollment deposit or commitment for most colleges

1 Deadline to request housing deposit refunds from colleges you choose NOT to attend

TBA Graduation!

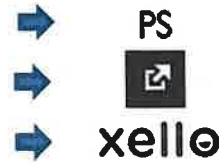
This month:

- Take AP exams
- Complete form to request final transcripts be sent to your college of choice
- Register for college orientation

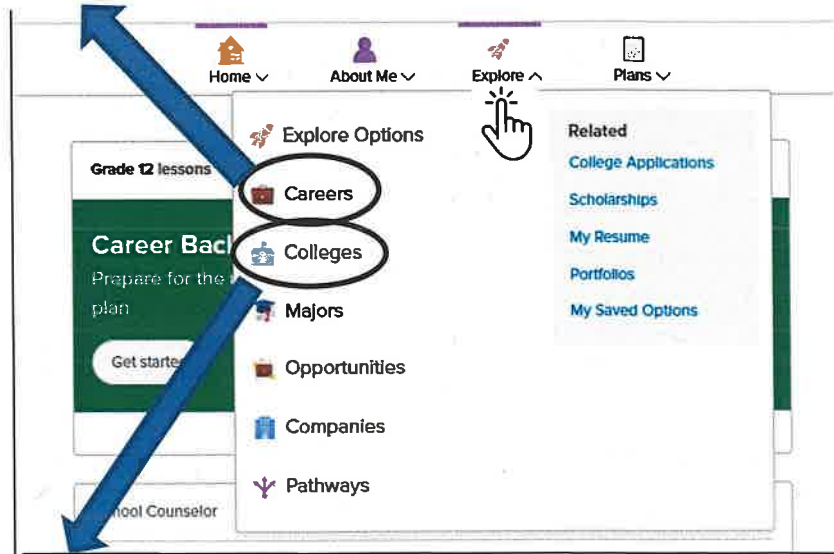


Career & College Exploration

- Log in to your student PowerSchool Account
- Click on the “Applications” logo
- Click to enter Xello!



- Explore > Careers: (click “More filters”)
 - Narrow by favorite school subjects
 - Narrow by clusters or groupings of careers (show “More Clusters”)
 - Narrow by demand for career
 - Explore the career options that match for you
 - In a specific career, select a “Related Major” to find “Schools that offer this major”



- Search for Colleges: (see “More filters”)
 - Search by location; the entire United States or specific states
 - Search 4-year (Undergraduate) or 2-year (technical & Career) colleges
 - Find a college with your career program (Areas of Study)
 - Enter as many search criteria as you like:
 - Location
 - Cost
 - Enrollment size
 - Community setting
 - Public or private
 - 2 or 4 year
 - Selectivity
 - Sports and activities



Career & College Exploration Websites

Xello is an excellent program that we encourage students to use to explore careers and colleges. If students would like to try other websites, here are more options.

Explore Career Opportunities

Employment data

- ❖ www.bls.gov/ooh Occupational Outlook Handbook
- ❖ jobcenterofwisconsin.com Wisconsin employment data

Career exploration inventories

- ❖ www.careerfitter.com Work personality analysis
- ❖ www.16personalities.com Myers Briggs personality test
- ❖ www.truity.com/test/holland-code-career-test Career interest inventory

Job Boards

- ❖ www.idealist.org/en Explore social impact jobs
- ❖ www.bigshoesnetwork.com WI, MN & Chicago jobs & internships

Explore College Possibilities

Regional college organizations and admission process

- ❖ go.wisconsin.edu Search for WI 2 & 4-year public colleges
- ❖ www.waicu.org Search for WI 4-year private colleges
- ❖ www.wtcsystem.edu Search for WI technical colleges
- ❖ www.ohe.state.mn.us Search for MN 2 and 4-year public colleges
- ❖ www.mnprivatecolleges.org Search for MN 4-year private colleges

Search for and compare colleges

- ❖ collegescorecard.ed.gov Search for & compare colleges on 1 scale!
- ❖ www.mymajors.com Help find a major for you and colleges
- ❖ universityhq.org Combines college rankings
- ❖ www.campusreel.org Real students touring around their campus



Military & Military School Information

Military opportunities include full-time duty in one of the five branches, delayed entry and part-time commitments in the National Guard or Reserves, and educational opportunities through military schools and ROTC. In addition to serving one's country and possibly making a career in the military, these experiences can offer the opportunity to see other parts of the world, learn an occupation, and earn the privilege of various monetary benefits towards a post-secondary education.

Many of the military branch recruiters visit OHS on a monthly basis, when school is in regular session. Parents are encouraged to be part of this decision-making process. Virtual visits are also available.

For further information on entrance requirements, education benefit packages and length of terms, contact:

ARMY ARMY RESERVE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD		1-888-550-ARMY 1-888-709-ARMY 1-800-GO-GUARD	goarmy.com goarmy.com/reserve nationalguard.com
NAVY NAVY RESERVE		1-800-USA-NAVY	navy.com navy.com/seatostars
AIR FORCE AIR FORCE RESERVE AIR NATIONAL GUARD		1-800-423-USAF 1-800-257-1212 1-200-TO-GO-ANG	airforce.com afreserve.com goang.com
MARINE CORP MARINE CORP RESERVE		1-800-MARINES	marines.com
COAST GUARD COAST GUARD RESERVE		1-877-NOW-USCG	gocoastguard.com
SPACE FORCE		1-800-525-0102	spaceforce.mil

Military Schooling and ROTC

Service Academies - Military environment with a first-class education

- Fully-funded tuition
- Highly competitive
- Admission criteria includes academics, standardized test scores, athletics & extracurricular activities, leadership experience & community involvement, congressional letter of recommendation
- Graduates receive Bachelor of Science degree and commissioned as officers
- Obligated to service a minimum of five years post-graduation
- US Military Academy, US Naval Academy, US Air Force Academy, US Coast Guard Academy, US Merchant Marine Academy

Senior Military Colleges - Combination of higher education and military instruction

- Financial aid available

- All cadets participate in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), but only those receiving ROTC scholarships are required to enter military service post-graduation
- Texas A&M University Corps of Cadets, Norwich University, Virginia Military Institute, The Citadel, Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, University of North Georgia, Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership

Maritime Academies - Train shipboard officers for vessels used for shipping and transportation. The US Merchant Marine fleet are civilian-owned ships that carry cargo and passengers on behalf of the US.

- Merchant Marine is auxiliary to Navy in times of war
- Service commitment is not always required
- Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Great Lakes Maritime Academy, Maine Maritime Academy, California State University Maritime Academy, State University of New York Maritime College, Texas A&M Maritime Academy

Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC) - College program that prepares students to become officers in the military

- Offered at many colleges and universities across the US
- Study the major of your choosing
- Take additional courses in military science
- Receive leadership development, military skills and career training
- Educational funding in exchange for service commitment, as an officer, post-graduation



Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)

Students who are committed to serving our country in a military branch are required to take the ASVAB to determine eligibility for training programs. The ASVAB is a unique tool that helps measure specific aptitudes or talents that a student may or may not be aware of having.

Students that are unsure about their future path may also take the ASVAB. Results can be helpful in making career decisions. A military recruiter will not contact you unless you indicate an interest.

The ASVAB is given free of charge at OHS each year, or at a recruiting office throughout the year. **This year the test is the morning of Tuesday, October 29th and March 3rd. Students sign up in Student Services.** For ASVAB prep, see march2success.com or <http://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/asvab>.



January 20, 2025

Mr. Frederick Hilltopper, District Manager
Hilltopper Group LLC
7738 West 80th Street
Hometown, WI 54202

Dear Mr. Hilltopper:

I am writing to express my interest in the Administrative position at the Hilltopper Group LLC. With a strong background in office organization, communication, and digital productivity, I am confident that my skills and certification as a Microsoft Office Specialist make me an excellent fit for this role.

As an industry-recognized credential holder as a Microsoft Office Specialist, I am highly proficient in tools such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and Powerpoint. I leverage these platforms to streamline workflows, manage data efficiently, and enhance team collaboration. My ability to create organized digital systems has consistently improved efficiency and accuracy in previous administrative roles.

I would like to request an interview to discuss my qualifications in detail and have enclosed my resume. I can be reached at the above address or by telephone (608) 555-1938. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Perry Jameson
Perry Jameson

Encl: Jameson Resume

Resume Writing Tips:

- A good resume is brief and concise, typed neatly with **no errors**.
- Limit yourself to one page only. As a rule, two page resumes are acceptable when you have over ten years of experience.
- Save your resume in Google Docs and print it on the best quality printer and paper available.
- Type or print it on 8" x 11" professional paper. Use 1" margins on both sides and ½ - 1" margins on the top and bottom of the page. Double space between each section of the resume.
- **Spelling must be accurate.** Use spell check.
- Use clear and concise statements describing your experiences. **Use proper grammar and punctuation.**
- Use a heading at the beginning of each section. Set it off by typing it in all caps or underlining the heading.
- Under the headings "Education" & "Experience," the most recent should be listed first.
- Have someone review your resume before you consider it a final version.
- When describing your experiences use **action verbs** that will stand out and tell the employer that you have really done something.

SAMPLE HS STUDENT RESUME

PERRY JAMESON

1515 Stanley Drive #62
Hometown, WI 54202
perry.jameson@dbplanet.com
(608) 555-1938

OBJECTIVE

To obtain knowledge of the day-to-day workings of a communications, public relations or publishing firm through a part-time job or summer internship.

EDUCATION

Hometown High School, Senior
Graduation date: May 2025
GPA: 3.85, top 5% of class

RELEVANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDIES

Technical writing, advanced composition, debate, video production, college algebra, computer classes providing knowledge of word processing, desktop publishing, and web software.

EXPERIENCE

Stock person, Hometown Grocery Store

- **Jan. 2021 – present.** Organize and maintain proper stock of grocery items

Newspaper Staff Member, Hometown High School

- **Aug. 2021 – present.** Features Editor of campus newspaper
- **Aug. 2021 – Aug. 2023.** Researched information for news articles using library and Web sources; composed and edited informational articles, columns, editorials, and advertising copy

HONORS, AWARDS, AND MEMBERSHIPS

- **U.S. Media Association Scholarship recipient**
Scholarship based on academic achievement, community service, and campus participation and leadership in high school communications projects and studies
- **President of high school chapter of Future Communicators of America (FCA), 2018 – present**
Organize meetings, collaborate with members of the community, and travel to conferences.

INVOLVEMENT

- **Hometown High School basketball team, 2021 – present**
Team Captain, 2023
- **Volunteered at Neighbor's Day Clean-Up, May 2021**

Tips for a Successful Job Interview

The key to successful interviewing is to make a positive impression on a prospective employer to enhance your chances of getting the job.

Clothing: The most important rule is to dress appropriately for the position you are applying for. Applying for a part-time or summer non-professional job is a little different from applying for a full-time professional position. Dress should be neat and tidy – business casual is usually appropriate for a non-professional position (think of how most teachers dress for school). For example, khakis and a neatly tucked in polo shirt would work well. You should avoid extreme hairstyles, colors, shoes, jewelry, piercings, tattoos, makeup, and perfume. No jeans or shorts, no tank tops, crop tops or anything especially low cut (shirt or pants) or too short (skirt or blouse) - keeping everything professional is a must.

Interview Questions: It's important for job seekers to prepare for a job interview. Review typical interview questions and answers, and practice your responses before you go. Ask a family member, a friend, or your counselor to ask you some questions so you can practice your answers. Take the time to personalize your responses so they reflect you as a person, and as a candidate for employment. See About.com for common answers.

- Tell us about yourself
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- Why are you looking for a job?
- Why are you interested in working for our company?
- What have you done in school to prepare for working at our company?
- Why should we hire you?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in this position?
- How would you describe your ability to work as a team member?
- What has been your most rewarding accomplishment
- What are your expectations for a wage?
- Tell me about a problem you recently handled
- Have you ever had difficulty with a supervisor or teacher? How did you handle that?



Be Prepared: Don't just show up for the interview. The more information you have prepared in advance, the better impression you will make on the interviewer. Take the time to prepare a resume and gather references before you start looking for a job. Bring the following with you to the interview:

- Completed job application (if the employer doesn't have it already)
- References
- Resume (if you have one)
- Notepad / pen with questions to ask employer written down

Know what days and hours you are available to work – the employer will ask. Flexibility is definitely an asset because the more time you are available, the easier it is for the employer to set a work schedule. Also know how you are going to get to and from work if you don't drive.

Be Polite: It's essential to have good manners when interviewing. Shake your interviewer's hand. Don't sit until you are invited to. Don't slouch in your chair. Don't use slang or swear. Be polite, positive, and professional throughout the interview. Do not use your electronic device at any point during the interview.

Be on Time: Arrive at the interview site 10 minutes early. If you're not sure where to go, get directions ahead of time. If you don't have a driver's license, make sure you have a ride.

Go on Your Own: If a parent/guardian/friend brings you to an interview, don't bring them into the building with you. It's important that you speak for yourself and connect with the interviewer without someone else's assistance.

Send a Thank You Note: Take a few minutes to thank the person who interviewed you. Send a paper note thanking the interviewer for taking the time to meet with you.

Gap Year

What is a gap year?

A gap year is a break typically taken between high school and college that might include travel, work, study, volunteering, or research. It can be a time for students to explore the world and gain valuable life skills and experience while transitioning into independence.

What are some of the pros and cons?

Possible benefits

Break from schoolwork
Opportunity to travel
Gain real life skills
Work on independence
Earn money to pay for future education

Questions to consider

Will I go back to school if I take a break?
Will I be safe if I go abroad?
Am I ready for full-time work?
How far away from my family can I live?
Am I a good saver?

What are some gap year options?

- **Work**
- **Civil service** in military or national service organization
- **Pursuing arts or athletics**
- **Travel the world** as a tourist
- **Organized gap year program**, abroad or domestic - Students are accepted into a program to travel, study, and/or volunteer. Some programs offer educational stipends after the experience

Recommended reading by US News & World Report:

The Complete Guide to the Gap Year: The Best Things to Do Between High School and College, by Kristin M. White



Gap Year Programs

*Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

- **AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps**

- Full-time, 10 month, residential, national service program for 18-24 year olds
- Serve on teams to address needs related to natural and other disasters, infrastructure improvement, environmental stewardship and conservation, energy conservation, and urban and rural development
- <https://www.nationalservice.gov/>

- **CIEE Gap Year Abroad**

- One- or two-semester program, live with a host family, 11 countries to choose from
- Take classes with students from around the world, live with a native host family, and volunteer with local organizations and charities
- <https://www.ciee.org/gap-year-abroad/>

- **Youth With a Mission**

- Faith-based (Christian) with locations around the world to work with refugees
- Cost varies, usually around \$5,000 per year
- <http://www.ywam.org/>

- **Outward Bound**

- 30 - 85 day expedition based program
- Develops real-world decision making, group management and leadership skills
- Costs vary, scholarships & financial aid are available
- <https://www.outwardbound.org/>

- **Verto Education**

- Travel the world for 1 or 2 semesters while completing general education requirements
- Freshman year study abroad
- Credits awarded from Portland State University and pre-approved to transfer to partner institutions
- www.vertoeducation.org

Thinking of Being A Transfer Student?

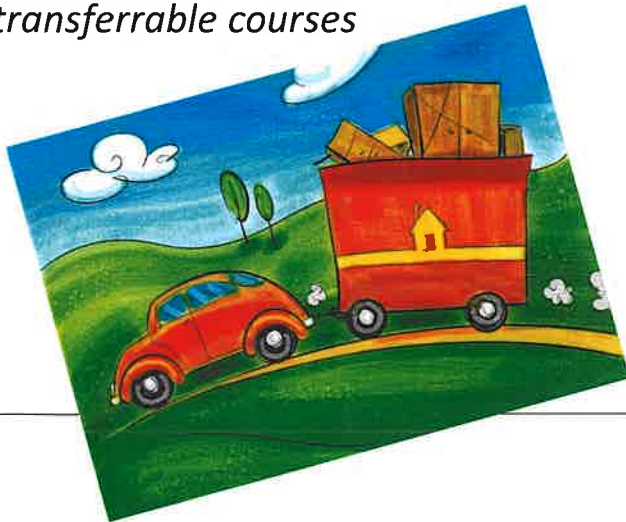
There may be many benefits to attending a 2-year college then transferring



...But there are some risks too

Pros:

- ✓ *Good value—save on tuition, live at home, keep current job*
- ✓ *Acclimate to college level courses with smaller class sizes*
- ✓ *A place to improve GPA and academic skills*
- ✓ *Explore career options while taking transferrable courses*



Cons:

- Some degrees are best to enter right away (teacher, performing arts, global studies, international language/business and some health majors)
- Postponing decision making and “just taking generals” is not a plan
- Missed social connections at future college if not starting with everyone else
- Not all credits are guaranteed to transfer everywhere
- Transfer credit may be ***elective credit*** depending on your major at your transfer institution

Transferology will help you check to see if your credits will transfer (*in Wisconsin*)!
Visit: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/transfer/>

The more you communicate to each college about your goals, the more they can help you create a plan to achieve them!

ALL Juniors will take the ACT!

- Every Junior at OHS will take the “Legacy ACT” plus writing on Tuesday March 10, 2026
- This ACT administration is completely FREE!
- This ACT can count for college admissions, placement and scholarship programs
- Students will register for this ACT during school by creating a MyACT account
 - Students may select up to 4 colleges to send their scores to FOR FREE!
 - Colleges will only consider **the highest ACT score** reported
 - Students send scores after testing through their MyACT account for \$20 per report



Prepare:

- All OHS Juniors will prepare for the ACT during school, using their Pre-ACT results from September
- Continue to review your Practice ACT results to practice and identify areas to focus
- Use FREE websites to test yourself and get tutorials:
 - Take FREE practice activities, tutorials and tests using <https://act.org> (Test Prep tab)
 - <https://www.march2success.com/> (our Courses) Create an account for free ACT prep.
 - <https://uniontestprep.com/act>
 - <https://pages.act.org/eBook-Stages-of-Taking-a-College-Entrance-Exam.html> Free e-book
- PAY FOR ACT prep options:
 - January 19, 2026 – No school day - Schoolhouse Tutoring ACT Prep - \$60 + optional \$20 book
 - Virtual - Six module - UW-L ACT Prep class \$199



Test Day:

- Relax! Get plenty of rest and eat well the night before and morning of
 - Bring the following with you to your ACT test:
 - Yourself, well rested with a good breakfast wearing comfortable clothing
 - (Saturday National Test Dates) Your admission ticket including your picture
 - A picture ID
 - An approved calculator. Visit actstudent.org, click on the “Test Day” tab for calculator FAQ
 - If paper testing, several (NOT mechanical) sharpened #2 pencils and a watch
- **Do NOT bring your cell phone to the ACT Test! Using your phone at any time in any way during testing or breaks will invalidate your test!**
- As you get started, take a few deep breaths to calm yourself. Keep a positive attitude
- Listen carefully to all instructions and ask questions if you hear something you don’t understand
- Pace yourself and occasionally check the time
- If you finish before time is up, reread the questions and check your answers
- Don’t forget, answer every question. Even if your guessing!

Changes to & about the ACT:

- Many colleges are “Test optional” meaning they no longer require ACT or SAT test scores for applicants
- The UW System has **not** announced extension of their test optional policy past the class of 2026
- A strong ACT score can help students with admissions, placement, scholarships and honors programs
- Starting April 2025, ACT will replace the traditional “Legacy ACT” with the “Enhanced ACT”
 - The Enhanced ACT is 50 minutes shorter, has 84 fewer questions and does not include Science
- Students can indicate their preference for colleges to consider ACT score *OR* not consider their score on their college applications
- Students who have taken multiple ACT exams may request a “Superscore” in their MyACT account
 - A superscore uses the highest subscores from each of a student’s ACT administrations to recalculate the highest composite score possible
 - Not all colleges accept superscores. Check with your colleges



Other test dates:

- Students who are not satisfied with their ACT score can register for additional administrations on national ACT test dates
- The ACT costs \$68 (\$25 to add writing, \$4 to add Science). **Most colleges do not require the writing portion of the ACT**, or would accept a writing score from the March 10 ACT
- The following is the ACT schedule of exams and registration deadlines for this school year:

Test Date	Register By	Late Registration (Additional Fee)
September 6, 2025	August 1	August 19
October 18, 2025	September 12	September 30
December 13, 2025	November 7	November 24
February 14, 2026	January 7	January 21
March 10, 2026	ALL Juniors required FREE - No registration required	
April 11, 2026	March 6	March 24
June 13, 2026 At OHS	May 8	May 27
July 11, 2026	June 5	June 24



The SAT

A small number of Onalaska students will take the SAT each year as well:

- Certain colleges (East/West coast or selective) require the SAT instead of the ACT (*most take both*)
- SAT consists of :
 - The SAT tests; reading, writing (grammar) and math.
 - The essay portion and all SAT subject tests have been discontinued.
- Register for the SAT at: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat>
- Preparation options for the SAT is similar to the ACT (see the next page)

HOW IS COLLEGE DIFFERENT FROM HIGH SCHOOL?

FOLLOWING THE RULES IN HIGH SCHOOL	CHOOSING RESPONSIBLY IN COLLEGE
1. High school is mandatory and usually free. 2. You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities. 3. There is typically one set of requirements for students to graduate. Guiding principle: You will usually be told what to do and corrected if your behavior is out of line.	1. College is voluntary and can be expensive. 2. You must balance your responsibilities and set priorities. 3. You will face moral and ethical decisions you have never faced before. 4. Graduation requirements are complex and differ from year to year. You are expected to know how those apply to you. Guiding principle: You are expected to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as the consequences of your decisions.
GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES	SUCCEEDING IN COLLEGE CLASSES
1. Classes generally have no more than 30 students. 2. You may study outside class as little as 0-2 hrs. per week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation. 3. Teachers lecture on all content on tests. 4. Parents can check on and view grades. 5. You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class. Guiding principle: You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings.	1. Classes may number 100 students or more. 2. You need to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class. 3. Some content on tests comes strictly from textbooks, not lectures. 4. Parents cannot check on grades. 5. Online classes can take more time than face-to-face classes. 6. Must progress through a program with certain grades or you could lose financial aid. Guiding principle: It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material. Lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption you've already done so.
HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS	COLLEGE PROFESSORS
1. Teachers remind you of incomplete work and check for all completed homework. 2. Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class and approach you if they believe you need assistance. 3. Teachers provide you with information missed during an absence. 4. Teachers present material to help you understand the textbook. 5. Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes. 6. Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process. 7. Teachers monitor attendance. 8. Teachers remind you of assignments and due dates. Guiding principle: High school is a learning environment where you acquire facts and skills.	1. Professors may not always check homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests. They may not remind you of incomplete work. 2. Professors expect and want you to attend their office hours and expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance. 3. Professors expect you to get missed information from other classmates. 4. Professors may not follow the textbook. 5. Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify important points for notes. 6. Professors may not formally take attendance, but are still likely to know if you attended. You can be automatically dropped from classes for non-attendance. 7. Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus for all due dates and course requirements. Guiding principle: College is a learning environment where you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you have learned.

TESTS IN HIGH SCHOOL	TESTS IN COLLEGE
1. Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material. 2. Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflicts with other school events. Guiding principles: Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown.	1. Testing is usually infrequent and cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You need to organize the material and prepare. Some courses may have only 2-3 tests per semester. 2. Professors schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities. Guiding principle: Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new problems.
GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL	GRADES IN COLLEGE
1. Consistent good homework grades may raise your overall grade when test scores are low. 2. Initial test grades, even if they are low, may not have an affect on your final grade. 3. You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D- or higher. Guiding principle: Effort counts! Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."	1. Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade. 2. Watch out for first tests! These are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected, but they also may count for a substantial part of your course grade. 3. You may graduate only if your average meets the departmental standard. Some programs will drop students without a C average. Guiding principle: Results count! Though a "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help you achieve good results, it will not substitute for results on your final grade.

HOW TO MAKE THE TRANSITION:

- Take control of your own education
- Get to know your professors; they are your single greatest resource
- Be assertive; seek help/tutoring when you need it; use tutoring, writing, and math labs on campus
- Take control of your time. Plan ahead to satisfy academic obligations and make room for everything else
- Stretch yourself; enroll in at least one course that really challenges you
- Make thoughtful decisions; don't take a course just to satisfy a requirement; don't drop courses too quickly. Consider how your courses can prepare you directly or indirectly for your future career
- Think beyond the moment! Set goals for the semester, the year, and your college career

College Campus Visits

You Won't Know Until You Go!

Exploring campuses is well worth your while. Visiting colleges is a great way to get a feel for what college is like. When the time comes, it can help you decide if a specific college is right for you.

The **spring of your junior year** is a great time to get started. Walking around campus while school is in session will give you a true sense of campus life. **OHS will allow every student one excused day from school for a college visit.** Ask your parent/guardian to notify the main office ahead of your visit and tell them you're going on a campus tour so it can be marked accordingly.

Arrange a Visit:

All colleges have an **admissions office** that can help you plan your visit. You can plan **your own individual visit** to a college campus, or go during their **large group open house events**. Take these important first steps to schedule your visit:

- Contact the college admissions office through the college's website or by email or phone to get details and make a reservation
- Allow plenty of time in your schedule for tours, questions, and exploration of the campus and surrounding area

If you are unable to visit a school due to distance or scheduling constraints, go to the campus' website or use sites such as campusreel.org to take a virtual tour.



What to Expect:

Campus visits can range from a quick hour to an overnight stay, from a casual guided tour to a formal presentation. Be sure to ask how long the whole visit will take so you can be prepared. Most campus visits will include the following:

- An **informational session** – an admission representative talks to you or your group about the college before the campus tour
- A **campus tour** – these are usually led by current students. You'll see the main parts of the campus and have a chance to ask questions

These are other items to check off your to-do list!

SHOULD DO:

- Attend a class
- Meet with an admissions officer
- Meet with a financial aid officer
- Eat in the dining hall

CAN DO:

- Attend a club meeting, sports practice session, or sporting event
- Meet with a professor in your area of study
- Spend the night in a residence hall

Get Ready:

Before your visit, you should get prepared.

- Explore the college's website and review any materials the college has sent you. This will help you come up with questions specific to that college
- Make a list of questions to ask both staff and students. You can use the College Comparison Worksheet in your STAR Conference folder as a starting point
- Get a map of the college campus and check where the admission office is. This will help ensure that you're on time for your visit

Use the College Comparison

Worksheet in your STAR

Conference folder as a starting point for questions to ask.

Remember the Following:

Pack a notebook and take pictures so you can record your impressions. You'd be surprised at how easy it is to forget details after you've seen a few colleges.

- Take notes on your College Comparison Worksheet
- Ask to tour a freshman residence hall
- After the formal tour, explore the parts of campus they did not show you
- After checking out the campus, take time to explore nearby restaurants, movie theaters, malls, and even places for employment
- Note your overall impressions after each visit (the best/worst part about my visit was...)



College Comparison Worksheet

College	Sample U.	College 1	College 2	College 3
Location Distance from home	4 hours			
Environment - Community setting - Size of nearest community - Co-ed, male : female ratio - Campus diversity - Private or public (religious affiliation)	In nature Nearest city is 20,000 ppl. 6:4, male Very diverse Private - none			
Size - College as a whole - College major – cohort	5,300 total 25 students			
Campus Visit Impressions - Physical; buildings & grounds - Faculty and staff - Other students (dress, behavior, feel) - Food quality, quantity and cost - Overall (gut feeling) impression	Well kept Energetic! Cool like me Yumm, but left hungry It'd be OK			
Admissions - Deadlines "Average admitted student profile" - GPA/Class rank - ACT/SAT score - Other factors	None Top 50% 21 ACT Flute players wanted!			
Academics - Majors of interest offered - Special admissions requirements - Special graduation requirements - Student/faculty ratio - Typical class size	All 3 interests Apply 2 nd year 2yrs Wrld Lang 12:1 24			
College Expenses - Application fees, deposits - Tuition, housing and meals - Other expenses, books, travel, etc	Free, \$100 \$45,000/yr! Book rental included			
Financial Aid - Deadlines - Additional required forms? - College sponsored scholarship opportunities and deadlines	December 1 No I get \$25,000! App due Feb 1			
Housing - Residence hall requirements - Residence hall options & cost - Co-ed rooms, floors, buildings - Meal plans & requirements	Freshman year Co-ed suite style+\$500/yr Min. 7 meal plan			
Student life - Lively weekends or ghost town - Recreational - Clubs/organizations - Greek life - Intramurals - Athletics - Other	Fun weekends Rugby! Asian American Club Floor hockey! Have fencing!			
Academic Assistance - Tutoring services - Advising - Level of support vs my level of need	For my major Same all 4 yrs Just right			
Overall "Gut feeling" Rating	6.8 / 10			

Sample College Comparison Worksheet

College	Western Technical	UW - Stevens Point	Iowa State
Location Distance from home	10 minutes	2 hours	4 hours
Environment - Community setting - Size of nearest community - Co-ed, male : female ratio - Campus diversity	Med. city (La Crosse: 51, 834) La Crosse area: 135,000 49% male/51% female 17% diverse students	Small city (Stevens Pt: 26,465) Overall area: 70,377 58% female/42% male 14% diverse students	Med. city (Ames: 66,427) Ames area: 125,000 44% female/56% male 18% diverse students
Type of school	Public, technical school	Public, in state, 4 year	Public, out of state, 4 year
Size - College as a whole - College major – cohort	4,600 students Technical diploma, Associates degree, and transfer programs	7,275 students Undergraduate degrees and graduate degrees	26,346 students Undergraduate and graduate degrees
Admission Requirements "Average admitted student profile" - GPA/Class rank - ACT/SAT score - Other factors	High School diploma Meet program requirements	Admitted student profile: GPA Avg: 3.3 ACT Avg: 23 (optional)	Admitted student profile: GPA Avg: 3.75 ACT 21-28 (optional this year)
Total Cost of Attendance (per year)	\$2,410 (tuition and fees) \$4,187 (housing and meals) \$733 (books/supplies) <u>\$3,390 (other expenses)</u> \$10,720 (TOTAL COST)	\$9,720 (tuition and fees) \$9,280 (housing and meals) \$416 (books/supplies) <u>\$3,148 (other expenses)</u> \$22,564 (TOTAL COST)	\$30,140 (tuition and fees) \$10,928 (housing and meals) \$800 (books/supplies) <u>\$3,350 (other expenses)</u> \$45,218 (TOTAL COST)
Financial Aid - Deadlines - College sponsored scholarship opportunities and deadlines	Eligible for federal and state grants	Eligible for federal and state grants	Eligible for federal grants NOT eligible for state grants
Housing - Residence hall requirements - Residence hall options & cost - Co-ed rooms, floors, buildings - Meal plans & requirements	On-campus housing available for 200 students Apartment style Co-ed floors Meal plan req. for on campus	On-campus housing available Required for freshman and sophomores. Apartments and traditional rooms available	On-campus housing available, 92% of all students live on campus, apartments and traditional rooms available
Student life - Lively weekends or ghost town - Recreational - Clubs/organizations - Greek life - Intramurals - Athletics - Other	NJCAA Athletics Wellness Center Student Government and clubs Can be a part of UW's Marching Band or Choir	NCAA Division 3 Athletics 19 Varsity teams 261 Student clubs 21% of students have studied abroad	NCAA Division 1 Athletics 16 Varsity teams 800 Student clubs 60 Greek life organizations Intramural and Club sports
Academic Assistance - Tutoring services - Advising - Level of support vs my level of need	Tutoring, Advising, Financial Aid assistance, Study rooms for group work in library	Tutoring and Learner Support Writing Center Student Success Center	Peer tutoring, Advising, study groups, academic leadership development, mentoring, coaching, course support



Gear Up for College Applications... With Your *Summer Homework!*



Make it easier to complete your college applications in the fall. Gather a list of the following during the *summer before your senior year*, so you can quickly and efficiently complete your applications.

- List of about 3 colleges where you plan to apply.
 - If you have a list of 10 colleges, try to narrow down your choices. Applying to too many colleges can be time consuming and stressful in the Fall.
 - Note the application deadlines for each
- List of teachers, counselor, coaches, etc. to ask for letters of recommendation (if needed)
- Complete your Letter of Recommendation Request Worksheet (in this packet, Google classroom, student services office) summarizing your:
 - Involvement - school/community activities including participation dates, leadership roles, community service, youth groups, clubs
 - Employment, including dates
 - Accomplishments - any academic, athletic, community recognition received
 - Any special circumstances you've overcome
- Research essay prompts for the applications you plan to complete (see below)
 - Draft your essay responses (see next page)
 - Have someone proofread your essays for content and grammar/punctuation, then make revisions
- Have access to your Social Security Number. Many colleges require your SSN to apply

College Application Essay Examples

- (UW - all campuses) Each student is unique. Please tell us about the particular life experiences, talents, commitments, and/or interests you will bring to our campus.
- (UW - La Crosse) Please respond to ONE of the following: (1) Tell us about any circumstances that may have had an impact on your academic performance. OR (2) Tell us why you are interested in attending UW-La Crosse and what aspects of the campus are especially important to you.
- (UW - Madison) Tell us why you would like to attend the University of Wisconsin–Madison. In addition, please include why you are interested in studying the major(s) you have selected. If you selected undecided, please describe your areas of possible academic interest.
- If you had the opportunity to interview any prominent person - living or dead, or fictional - whom would you choose, and why?
- The lessons you take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- Describe a topic or concept you find engaging that makes you lose track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
- Rank order your involvements (school activities, clubs, community organizations, work, family responsibilities) and explain why the most important activity is at the top of your list.

College Application Guide

Application Checklist

- ✓ **Verify deadlines!**
- ✓ **General application:** Is all information accurate and complete? Don't leave questions blank unless the application allows it. Is your school part of a system? (Common Application, UW System, SendEDU)
- ✓ **Payment:** Have a credit or debit card handy
- ✓ **Transcripts:** Have them sent for FREE and directly from Student Services using Xello. Even if a college says it's not required. They will need them eventually. Transcripts are not official unless sent from school.
- ✓ **Letters of recommendation (if needed):** Do you have the number of letters required? Check to see how they need to be submitted (online, emailed, mailed etc).
- ✓ **ACT/SAT scores:** If you need to send test scores to additional schools, contact the testing company directly (MyACT.org).
- ✓ **Complete portfolio, interview, audition (if needed):** If any of these are optional, doing them gives you a leg up on the competition.

Frequent Application Errors

"I'll just use the Common App." The Common App is great, IF you are applying to several colleges in several different states. However, the Common App takes 6-10 hours to complete! Most students applying to schools within 1 or 2 systems (EG: UW & MN State systems) could complete 2 or more applications in 2 hours total.

"I'll wait to get a better score." Submit your application even if you still plan to take the ACT, SAT, or another exam again.

"I used spell check." Words can be spelled correctly but used incorrectly. Ask a counselor, teacher, or family member to proofread the application to catch any errors or poor phrasing.

"I'll send my application as soon as I'm finished." Before you click "send," double-check that you have included all necessary materials.

"I assume this is right." If you're confused by a question or any part of the application, ask someone. Visit your counselor's office or a call to the admissions office can save you from making an embarrassing error.

Get Noticed: College or Scholarship Essay Tips

- **Don't "recycle" essays without some tweaking** - An essay that sounds like it has been used before will blend in with everyone else's. If you copy and paste from a previous essay, be sure to change any identifying college information.
- **Captivate your audience** - Make your essay engaging and memorable. Include a quick, enticing intro; give the reader a reason to finish reading it. Let your personality shine. Use examples. The essay is your opportunity to show what makes you unique. Write something memorable in your own voice.
- **Share something new** - Don't rehash what you already shared in your application (listing clubs and leadership roles). Share something you did in that job/club/sport that you are proud of. Share aspects of your life that are not in the application. Is something about your identity an important aspect of who you are? Explain why and how.
- **Be yourself** - Choose a topic that is meaningful to you. Use your own words. Show off a side of yourself that your application does not show. Don't simply write what you think the admissions office wants to hear.
- **Accentuate the positive** - When writing about a personal experience or challenges, emphasize how the experience changed you for the better or built resilience.
- **Write in the active voice** - Doing so will make your essay more clear and concise.
- **Don't overextend** - Your essay isn't a term paper. Stay focused on your topic.
- **Ask other people for input** - Whether it's a teacher, counselor, friend, or parent, ask someone you respect for some candid feedback. Does it have grammatical errors, Is it confusing? Boring? Avoid cliches ("I am a hard worker") or standard essay topics. Try to come up with something an admissions office hasn't seen a million times before.
- **Leave time for rewriting** - Look for weak or dull spots and spelling/grammatical errors. Never let your first draft be your final draft. DO NOT rely on spell check. It's a helpful tool, but ALWAYS have someone proofread for you.
- **Revise and reword** - Improve on your first draft through various rewrites. Read the essay aloud to find awkward sentences or problems. Don't just list your attributes; be specific and try to give examples.
- **Use care when writing about a delicate or controversial subject** - Religion, a bout with mental illness, or an issue with your boyfriend or girlfriend are all fine subjects for an essay. But, if you handle them wrong, you may present yourself in a negative light.
- **Do not write like you text** - An admissions office is not impressed by a smiley face or text slang 😊. Treat your application seriously. Seriously.



DIRECT ADMIT WISCONSIN

You can apply to 10 University of Wisconsin campuses with one click of a button!

- OHS students can opt into the Universities of Wisconsin Direct Admit program when registering for Senior year classes at OHS (or before May 1, 2026)
- Be directly admitted to campuses
 - NO admission application
 - NO application fee
 - NO Hassle!
 - Just check the box, we'll take it from there!
- OHS will send your transcript to the Universities of Wisconsin system
 - Students meeting GPA and curriculum guidelines will receive direct admit offers!
- Campuses will notify students starting in August (email and mail) with direct admission offers
- Beginning in August, students can move forward with the direct admit process by completing the Direct Admit Form (The UW System application)
- Students should read communication from their universities carefully and follow all directions to be sure not to miss out on:
 - Housing
 - Financial aid and scholarships
 - Placement testing
 - Program/Major requirements
 - Registration for classes
- Students must "accept" their direct admit offer by May 1, 2027
- Students not admitted through direct admit can still apply through the traditional holistic application process



Participating Universities

You could be directly admitted to one or all of these participating UW universities and/or branch campuses:

UW-GREEN BAY
UW-MILWAUKEE
UW-OSHKOSH
UW-PARKSIDE
UW-PLATTEVILLE
UW-RIVER FALLS
UW-STEVENS POINT
UW-STOUT
UW-SUPERIOR
UW-WHITEWATER

**LEARN MORE
ONLINE**



Wisconsin Tuition Promise

- Available to undergraduate students **with family Adjusted Gross Incomes (AGI) ≤ \$55,000** who enroll at participating UWs. Good for 4 consecutive years.
- What is included: Wisconsin resident tuition & segregated fees
- What is not included: Housing, meal plans, additional course fees, books
- Participating UW Schools: All except UW Madison and UW Milwaukee (they have their own programs)



Bucky's Tuition Promise

- What is included: WI resident tuition/fees at UW Madison for 4 years
- What is not included: Housing, meal plans, course fees, books
- Eligibility: Household AGI of \$65,000 or less
- Must complete FAFSA and CSS Profile to be eligible



Bucky's Pell Pathway

- What is included: WI resident tuition, fees, housing, meal plans, and supplies at UW Madison for 4 years
- Must complete FAFSA and CSS Profile to be eligible



Milwaukee Tuition Promise

- What is included: Wisconsin resident tuition and segregated fees at UW Milwaukee for 4 years
- What is not included: Housing, meal plans, additional course fees, books
- Eligibility: Household AGI of \$62,000 or less



Viterbo Tuition Promise

- Covers tuition for household AGI of \$75,000 or less



***More Tuition Promise programs by state listed on mypromisetool.org**



College Admissions Lingo

Decision Plans:

Depending on the college, students are sometimes asked to select an admission decision plan. Different decision options may give you a *slight* advantage in the admission process but will not tip the scales significantly.

Rolling Admission:	Most colleges encourage early application, but do not have a hard deadline. They will continue admitting students until they meet their recruitment goals.
Regular Decision (RD):	Apply by a specified date and receive your decision in a time frame published by the college. Student chooses to commit to attend the college (or not) by May 1.
Early Action (EA)	Apply by a specified date, earlier than Regular Decision, and receive your decision at an earlier date. Student chooses to commit to attend the college (or not) by May 1.
Early Decision (ED)	Extremely rare! Apply to only one school using this process by a specified date, student must commit to enrolling at this college and withdraw applications from all other colleges!

All Colleges will send you one of the following decisions:

- Acceptance:** Celebrate! You've been accepted! Compare your other offers, decide which is best for you and commit by May 1. Be sure to read all materials/emails and follow direction carefully.
- Deferral:** Also referred to as "**Waitlist**", this means the college is not prepared to accept or deny your application. You can wait and see what happens, but you **should help yourself** by contacting the college (this means the student) and ask if there's anything more you can provide. Additional personal statements, letters of recommendation, updated grades or test scores can make a difference.
- Denial:** You have not been admitted. First, don't take it personally! Next, look at what other options you have. Consider this could be fate. Maybe you're meant to go to a different school and meet the love of your life? If you're not able to move on, you can always appeal, but if you can't share new information, you won't likely get a new decision. "I really want to go here," is not new information.



*Apply to over 1,100 colleges
with just one application!*

Note: Not every college uses the
Common Application!

The Common App may take longer to complete than most college applications. If you are applying to many schools in many states, the Common App may be a good option!

To apply to college on the Common Application, start the following steps this summer:

1. Create your account on Commonapp.org. Create a username and password you won't forget!
2. Add colleges to your list. To find colleges that use Common Application visit commonapp.org/search-colleges.
3. Understand information on college-specific admissions requirements. Even though they use a "common application" schools' requirements vary. Use the requirements tracking tools on the Common App. to help.
4. Gather information about yourself; your transcript, extracurricular activities, test scores, parent info (degrees, occupation, employer).
5. Start your application! Don't sweat it! You can go back and change anything you enter before you submit!
6. Submit your application!
 - Be sure to review responses and have your essays proofread!
 - Be sure you have not used the same essays for different prompts.
 - Provide names and emails of your counselor and people you need recommendations from (if you are using the Common App., Student Services will send your transcript electronically via the Common App.).
 - Find this section under My Colleges > select any of your institution > select Recommenders & FERPA. Enter your counselor's email.
 - Answer the "FERPA" question:
 - "Yes" to waive your right to see written recommendations
 - "No" may make you appear distrustful of your recommenders, but it's up to you.
 - Pay the application fee (if any) online with a debit/credit card. Fee waivers are available for students in need.



SENIOR YEAR • What you really need

Top 10 Senior Year Needs

A common question seniors ask school counselors in their last semester is “What do I need to graduate?” This can be translated to “What’s the bare minimum I have to do to crawl across the stage this May?”

We’d like to answer that question in advance with the top 10 things every senior needs in their last year of high school.

- 10. A sense of accomplishment** – feeling you’ve completed something you’ve worked hard at for 4 years.
- 9. Usually at least two classes each semester!** History from those who came before you show that lackadaisical study habits are hard to contain to just the ‘unimportant’ classes.
- 8. Punctuality & attendance habits**, whether work, school or the military, everyone will expect you to be present and on time!
- 7. Scholarship money!** A big factor in getting AND keeping scholarships is what have you do over your *entire* senior year.
- 6. Your admission!** Those accepted to college can and do have their admissions revoked when final transcripts are sent at the end of the school year if 2nd semester grades are not consistent with other semesters.
- 5. Your future!** Regardless of what you do after May 2027, a strong work ethic will be expected and will take you far! Consider signing up for a Youth Apprenticeship or Mentorship for additional relevance in your Senior year.
- 4. To enjoy your final months** of high school... instead of living with the anxiety of “will I make it or not?” while your classmates enjoy themselves with end of the year celebrations.
- 3. Realize 4th quarter is short** for seniors! Seniors finish 3 weeks earlier than they are accustomed to. Last minute efforts to earn the grades you want need to start early!
- 2. To GRADUATE!** Every year there are good students who do not or barely pass their required courses because they assumed they could coast through the final quarter of high school.
- 1. AN EDUCATION!** There’s a reason high school is 4 years rather than 3 ½! You still have some things to learn!



Admissions
2320 Student Union
1725 State Street
La Crosse, WI 54601
608.785.8939
admissions@uwlax.edu
www.uwlax.edu

DATE

FIRST LAST
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE POSTAL

Dear FIRST:

Thank you for your application for admission to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. We are not able to make an admission decision at this time but are placing you on our postpone list. In our evaluation of your admission materials, it is clear that you have established a solid academic record with your grades, class rank/GPA, and ACT/SAT scores (if provided). However, what is lacking from your academic background is what we consider a rigorous academic class schedule for your senior year.

Your senior year curriculum is extremely important because it provides the foundation necessary to prepare for the academic challenges that you will face as a student at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Most students enter with a senior year schedule that includes advanced math, science, foreign language and/or AP course work. Typically, a student has the minimum requirements for admission consideration completed by the end of their junior year, and therefore the senior year provides the opportunity to take advanced courses in the above-mentioned academic disciplines. We do not find that to be the case in your senior year course selection.

Please realize that you are competing with other students who have similar academic records but are taking much more academically rigorous courses their senior year; therefore, we encourage you to add rigorous college-preparatory courses to your senior year. If you would like to improve your chances for admission by enhancing the academic rigor, please contact us as soon as possible. We will be happy to talk with you about your options and have you work with your school counselor to make these changes to your senior schedule.

Without any changes to your senior schedule, it is unlikely that you will be admitted from the postpone list. We hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Corey M. Sjoquist
Director of Admissions

Onalaska High School
Letter of Recommendation Request & Student Information

Attach additional sheet if necessary

Student Name: _____ **Date Requested:** _____ **Date Needed:** _____

Purpose of Letter: (check one) ☐ College application ☐ Scholarship application ☐ Other _____

Letter to be addressed to: Admissions Committee, Scholarship Committee, specific college(s), specific scholarship(s), or name/title

List your future goals (career/college/work):

Academic activities, leadership, awards & honors (please provide dates):

Extracurricular activities, leadership, awards & honors (please provide dates):

Community activities, volunteer experience and awards (please provide dates):

Employment (please provide dates):

What are 3-5 words you would use to describe yourself?

Describe any unusual circumstances that may affect your life (family, personal, financial, academic, COVID-related):

Describe your strengths, skills, attitudes or past experiences that might assist me in writing your letter:

Guide to Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation may be required for:

- College applications
 - Scholarship applications
 - Job applications
-

Complete the Letter of Recommendation Request sheet on the reverse side of this page. This is your opportunity to give those writing your letters the information they need about your accomplishments, activities, and goals. **Make a copy for each letter writer.**

Choose the right people to write your letters. They should be adults who know you well and can write a positive recommendation. Some good choices include teachers, school counselors, coaches, clergy, or supervisors. Do not choose parents or relatives.

Give the letter writers plenty of time (at least two weeks) to write your recommendation letter and let them know your deadline.

Thank your letter writers. Write a short note to show your appreciation.



The Letter of Recommendation

Request sheet allows you to give your letter writers a little more information about yourself:

- Your strengths
- Qualities that make you a good candidate for the school or scholarship
- Specific examples of how you have displayed those qualities

AND gives you the opportunity to provide information about your:

- Accomplishments
- Activities
- Goals

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

Scholarships

Local OHS Scholarships

One application for over 70 scholarships totaling \$750,000 for 85 different seniors! Applications available Jan. 2027.

Community Scholarships

Local scholarships we are made aware of are posted on the school website & newsletter from Sept. to June. Parent employers may also sponsor scholarships.

College Scholarships

After being admitted, students should contact their college to see what scholarships they are eligible for. The application for admission is sometimes the application for scholarships! About \$1 million awarded to OHS students last year!

National Scholarships

Search websites like fastweb.com for nationwide scholarships

Working & Saving

Find a Job

Work while you're in school and pay off your tuition/loans as you go.

Be careful not to work so many hours that you struggle to keep up with your classes!

Work Study

Work on campus to help pay for tuition.

Live simply

Don't overspend on the things you don't need. Drive a used car, use an old TV & furniture, eat from your meal plan, have roommates, etc!

Don't overuse a credit card!

You'll have to pay it back soon... plus interest!

Need-Based Financial Aid

Over 90% of all financial assistance for students in the United States comes from federal financial aid!

How to Apply for Need-Based Financial Aid:

1. Apply and be accepted to your college
2. October 1st, go to FAFSA.gov to start your financial aid application
 - a. Apply for an "FSA ID" at fsaid.ed.gov first
 - b. Try to complete your FAFSA by December 1st (deadlines vary)
3. Promptly submit any other documentation requested!
4. A Student Aid Report (SAR) will be emailed to you, letting you know the kind of assistance that you are eligible for.

What Kind of Financial Aid Can I Get?

\$\$ Grants (Free money!)

\$\$ Work Study (earned by working on campus)

\$\$ Student loans (paid back after you graduate)

How Need-Based Financial Aid Works:

Cost of Attendance
- Student Aid Index (SAI)
= Financial Need

Example:

\$10,000 cost College A
- \$3,500 SAI
= \$6,500 Financial Need

25,000 cost College B
- \$3,500 SAI
= \$21,500 Financial Need

Visit <https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/> to calculate what your EFC might be.



College Financials Comparison

Use this worksheet to calculate the costs of each school to get an accurate comparison.

	School 1:	School 2:	School 3:
1. Cost Per Year			
Tuition			
Required Fees +			
Housing & Meals +			
<i>A. Estimated Direct Costs =</i>			
2. Financial Assistance per Year			
Scholarships (Private and from the college)			
Federal Grants (PELL, SEOG) +			
State Grants +			
<i>B. Total Gift Aid =</i>			
Federal Direct Loan (Subsidized) +			
Federal Direct Loan (Unsubsidized) +			
<i>C. Total Student Loans =</i>			
3. Out of Pocket Costs per Year			
A. Estimated Direct Costs			
B. Total Gift Aid -			
C. Total Student Loans -			
TOTAL OUT OF POCKET COSTS =			

FAFSA

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID

How to Unlock Money for College



WHAT IS FEDERAL STUDENT AID?

Federal student aid comes from the federal government. It is money that helps students pay for higher education expenses. Student and parent must submit a FAFSA to see if they qualify for aid.

The FAFSA provides access to:

- **Federal and state grants** - money for college that doesn't need to be repaid
- **Work study** - money **earned** to help cover college expenses
- **Federal student loans** - money that is borrowed for college that is **paid back later**, sometimes with interest

Federal student aid covers expenses like tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation.

To help you understand your options for paying for college, check out:

- FAFSA4caster
- StudentAid.gov

Help is available to complete the FAFSA:

- 1.800.4.FED.AID
- StudentAid.gov/fsaid
- FAFSA.gov
- StudentAid.gov
- OHS Student Services
- Your college financial aid office

WHAT YOU NEED TO COMPLETE THE FAFSA:

- Social Security number
- Dates - birth, death, marriage, divorce
- Use the Data Retrieval Tool to save time in reporting tax info
- Most recent bank balances
- Amounts of any other income not reported on taxes
- Value of business or farm with more than 100 employees
- Value of any other assets like stocks, bonds and mutual funds

Do The
FAFSA
THE EARLIER THE BETTER

WHO PROVIDES PARENT INFO ON THE FAFSA?

Both biological or adoptive parents, if they are living together, regardless of marital status or gender.

In the case of separation, divorce or parents who do not live together, provide parent info for:

- the parent who provided the most financial support
- If the parent who completes the FAFSA is remarried, you must also include step-parent information

WHAT IS THE FEDERAL STUDENT AID PROCESS?

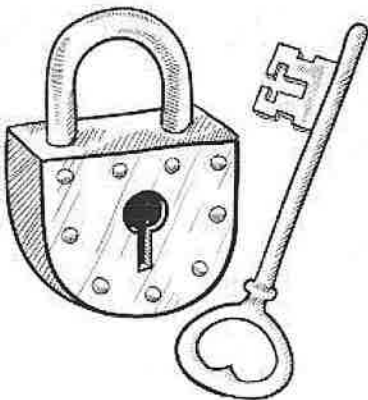
1. **Create a FAFSA ID.** Each student and parent/guardian must create a FSA ID, made of a username and password, to submit your FAFSA. Your FSA ID is used to confirm your identity and electronically sign your FAFSA. Go to **StudentAID.gov/fsaid** to complete this step.
2. **Complete the FAFSA.** Beginning October 1st of your senior year, you will submit a FAFSA at FAFSA.gov. You will report income and tax info from 2025. Colleges have different deadlines, so check with individual campuses. Using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT) lets you electronically transfer your federal tax return info into your FAFSA.
 - EASY: Transfer info with the click of a button
 - FAST: Instantly retrieve your information
 - ACCURATE: Correctly fill in your informationIn the finances section of the FAFSA, you will see a "Link to IRS" button if you are eligible to use this feature.
3. **Review your Student Aid Report (SAR).** After you apply, you will receive a SAR which contains the info reported on your FAFSA and your Student Aid Index (SAI). The SAI is a number used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid. Review your SAR info to make sure it is correct. The college(s) you list on your FAFSA will get your SAR data electronically.

The college's financial aid office will contact you if additional documentation is needed to continue processing your FAFSA. This is called verification.

4. **Review your Award Notification.** Each college's financial aid office will send you an aid offer showing the amount and types of aid (from all sources) the college will offer. You can compare the aid offers you receive and use this in your decision-making process in selecting a college. You will need to accept or decline the aid that is offered.

Please contact the college(s) financial aid office if your family would like to explain any special circumstances that may affect your financial aid eligibility.

WHEN SHOULD I COMPLETE THE FAFSA?



- Prior to starting the FAFSA, every student and parent need to create a FAFSA ID to fill out and electronically sign your FAFSA
StudentAid.gov/fsaid
- Then beginning October 1st of your senior year, you can complete the FAFSA
FAFSA.gov
- Check each college's priority filing date and complete your FAFSA before the appropriate deadlines

FAFSA HELP IS AVAILABLE!

- College Goal Wisconsin - Onalaska High School, October 2026
- Financial Aid Application help during Resource, November 2026



Free Money for College - Scholarships

Increase the odds that you will be awarded a scholarship!

Research the scholarship sponsor and personalize your answers. A scholarship application often contains the sponsor's scholarship selection criteria, but dig deeper. Research the scholarship sponsor. Look for the organizer's mission statement, which you'll often find in the "About Us" section of their website.



Get involved in your community. Students who volunteer enjoy a huge advantage with scholarship sponsors. Scholarship sponsors are looking for a long-time commitment to volunteering, which makes sense as many scholarship providers are non-profits committed to helping others.

Look professional. Google your name to make sure you have a professional online presence. Remove any inappropriate material from Facebook or Instagram. DO NOT use something that sounds unprofessional as an email account name.

Use a scholarship search engine. Using scholarship search engines will make your job easier. Check out Fastweb.com, Scholarships.com, Careerinfonet.org/scholarshipsearch.

Don't ignore optional questions. When supplying your background on scholarship search engines, answer the optional questions. Addressing these questions can generate twice as many scholarship matches.

Apply to many scholarships. You can increase your chances of being awarded a scholarship if you apply for all of them for which you qualify. Use a calendar to track dates and deadlines.

Avoid paying to apply for a scholarship. In the financial aid and scholarship world, you should never have to pay to apply! Watch out for scam websites and check the Better Business Bureau if you're unsure of an organization.

Be passionate. When writing a scholarship essay, let your personal voice come through. Include details in your essay that help reveal who you are. Focus on a problem and how you solved it or overcame adversity.

Think local. Local scholarships are easier to win than national or regional ones, because the pool of candidates is smaller. The OHS Student Services website (OHS Scholarship Database), the OHS newsletter, and Freddy's Footnotes list local scholarships. Mr. Arneson, OHS Scholarship Coordinator, will give you a packet of additional local scholarship information in January of your senior year.

A GUIDE TO FINANCIAL AID/SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET

SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH SERVICES (GENERAL) - These sites contain, in whole or in part, "free" scholarship search services.

1. <http://www.fastweb.com>
2. <http://www.gocollege.com>
3. <http://www.scholarships.com>
4. <http://www.collegexpress.com>
5. <http://www.collegescholarships.org>
6. <https://www.goingmerry.com/>
7. <https://bold.org/scholarships/>
8. Xello - log into your account through PowerSchool

SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH SERVICES (MINORITY)

1. <http://www.gmsp.org>
2. <http://www.collegefund.org> (Native American)
3. <http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/natamind.phtml> (Native American)
4. <https://uncf.org/scholarships> (African American)

GENERAL FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION - Browse through one or more of these sites to learn more about the financial aid application process, the different types of aid available and tips on how to find the right college.

1. <http://www.finaid.org> *site contains a financial aid estimation calculator
2. <https://studentaid.gov/>
3. <http://www.nasfaa.org>
4. <http://www.mappingyourfuture.org>
5. <http://www.tuitionfundingsources.com>

WISCONSIN FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION - These sites contain information specific to Wisconsin programs and colleges. Most have links to other sites as well.

1. <http://www.heab.state.wi.us>
2. <http://www.wasfaa.net>
3. <http://www.edvest.com>

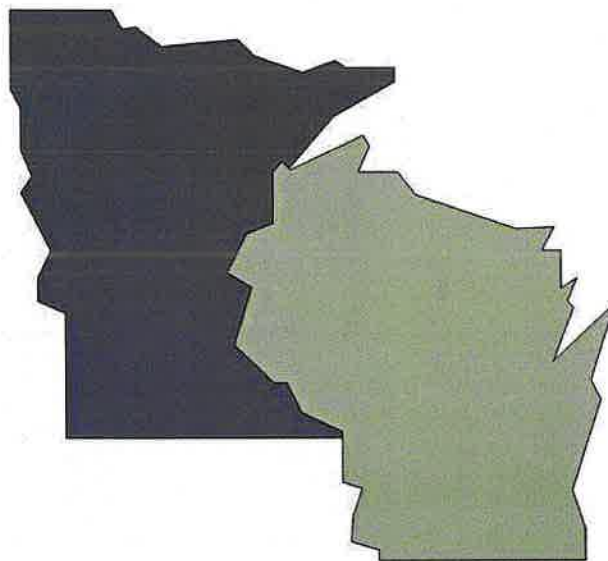
MILITARY AID OPPORTUNITIES/BENEFITS - Visit these sites for specific information pertaining to veteran and veteran dependent educational programs.

1. <http://www.finaid.org/military>
2. <http://www.myfuture.com/military/>
3. <http://www.sss.gov> (use this site to register with Selective Service)

RESPONSIBLE BORROWING/MANAGING STUDENT LOAN DEBT - These sites include information on borrower responsibilities, tips for saving money on loans and credit card information for students

1. <https://studentaid.gov/h/manage-loans>
2. <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-basics/tips-managing-paying-student-loans>

MINNESOTA – WISCONSIN RECIPROCITY BENEFITS



What is Wisconsin/Minnesota reciprocity?

The MN-WI Tuition Reciprocity Program provides tuition reciprocity for Wisconsin residents who enroll in an eligible Minnesota public institution on a space available basis. Students who qualify pay for course work at in-state tuition rates.

How does a student receive MN-WI tuition reciprocity?

A student *must* apply to HEAB and be approved to receive MN-WI tuition reciprocity. It is not automatic! Applications can be found at: <http://www.heab.state.wi.us/index.html>

When does a student need to re-apply for MN-WI reciprocity?

If you continue to attend the same school in Minnesota, your reciprocity will be renewed. However, if you apply to a different school in Minnesota, you must submit a new reciprocity application to HEAB.

Is there a deadline for applying for MN-WI reciprocity?

A MN-WI reciprocity application must be postmarked no later than the last day of scheduled classes of the first term for which a student expects to receive benefits under the agreement.

Applications and information for reciprocity can be found at:

<https://heab.state.wi.us/features/reciprocity.html>



MSEP

MIDWEST STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

A Midwestern Higher Education Compact Program

IT'S EASY TO SAVE MONEY ON OUT-OF-STATE TUITION

WHAT IS THE MSEP?

The Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP) is a tuition reduction program that makes attending out-of-state colleges and universities more affordable for non-resident students. By enrolling in MSEP at a participating institution, you will receive a reduced tuition rate—giving you a wider range of education options for your education dollars. Nearly one hundred colleges and universities in Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin have opened their doors to each others' citizens by offering **REDUCED TUITION RATES**.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

Through the MSEP, public institutions agree to charge students **NO MORE THAN 150%** of the in-state resident tuition rate and private institutions offer a **10% REDUCTION** on their tuition rates. Institutions may limit MSEP to specific programs or degree levels. You must enroll as a non-resident student at a participating MSEP campus to receive the discount. Actual savings through the program will vary from institution to institution depending upon the tuition rates. **IT'S ALMOST LIKE GETTING FREE MONEY.**



"MSEP has made it possible for me to attend a university that caters to my major of choice. The state I'm from does not offer the major I'm pursuing. (Without MSEP) I would not be able to afford college."

AMANDA
*Nebraska resident attending
Wichita State University*

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

It's easy. Simply visit MSEP.MHEC.ORG to:

1. Search for participating institutions and programs
2. Learn about campus enrollment requirements
3. Find campus-specific contact information
4. Learn more about this money-saving program

MSEP.MHEC.ORG

Questions? Contact us at
612-677-2777 or MSEP@MHEC.ORG.

WHY ARE YOU WAITING? START SAVING TODAY!