

Pomperaug High School  
Junior Post-Secondary Planning Packet  
Class of 2027



Pomperaug High School  
Counseling Department

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# Junior Post-Secondary Planning Timeline

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## Winter

- Attend Junior College Planning Night at Pomperaug High School.
- Complete course selection in PowerSchool for senior year - select challenging and interesting senior courses to support post-secondary plans.
- Use PSAT results to determine areas of strength and weakness.
- Develop a preliminary list of colleges in SchoolLinks under "Favorites & Lists."
- Visit Colleges during Winter Recess and Spring Break.
- Consider taking the SAT or ACT exam.
- Explore summer opportunities in the College & Career Center.

## Spring

- Begin college research on Admission Requirements for each college on your list.
- Continue to visit colleges.
- Attend NACAC College Fair at CT Convention Center in March - field trip offered to juniors.
- Ask one or two teachers for Letters of Recommendations by personally meeting with them.
- Take the CT SAT in school: March 2026**
- Take Advanced Placement Exams if applicable.
- Take an additional SAT or ACT exam in June or May.

## Summer

- Review SAT and ACT results. Register to take either exam one more time, if appropriate.
- Engage in enriching summer activities.
- Begin Common Application.
- Draft Common App personal statement and supplemental essays.

## Looking Ahead

- Many colleges offer Early Decision (ED) or Early Action (EA) deadlines on **October 15th, November 1st, November 15th** and **December 1st**. *Check individual college websites for specific deadlines.*
- Some colleges have Regular Deadlines (RD) as early as **November 30th**. *Check individual college websites for specific deadlines.*
- Students can apply for Financial Aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in October of senior year.
- Some colleges also require the CSS/Financial Aid Profile in addition to the FAFSA. *Check individual college websites and/or College Board for specific requirements.*

## Helpful Links

- [FAFSA](#) (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
- [CSS Profile](#) (College Scholarship Search)
- [College Scorecard](#) (highlights key indicators about the cost and value of US colleges)

# Standardized Testing

## Testing Calendar & Information

**CEEB Code for Pomperaug High School: 070685**

*Financial assistance for all testing fees and college applications may be available if you qualify for Free and Reduced lunch or if there are extenuating circumstances. Please see your counselor for further information.*

All juniors take the SAT during the CT school day in March. We recommend that juniors retake the SAT in May or June and/or in the fall of their senior year. Be certain to put the above code on all forms so PHS has a copy of your scores. You will have the opportunity to take advantage of the four free score reports sent to colleges when registering. Register online at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).

Test Date	Deadline for Registration
December 6, 2025	November 21, 2025
March 14, 2026	February 27, 2026
May 2, 2026	April 17, 2026
June 6, 2026	May 22, 2026

The ACT is a test designed to assess high school students' general education development and their ability to complete college level work. The test covers four skill areas: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning. While it is not necessary to take both the ACT and the SAT, some students may wish to use it as an alternative measurement. Most colleges will accept ACT scores. Check your schools to be certain! Register online at: [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline
December 13, 2025	November 7, 2025	November 24, 2025
February 14, 2026	January 9, 2026	January 23, 2026
April 11, 2026	March 6, 2026	March 24, 2026
June 13, 2026	May 8, 2026	May 29, 2026
July 11, 2026	June 5, 2026	June 24, 2026

## Comparing SAT vs. ACT

	SAT	ACT
<b>Why Take It</b>	Colleges use SAT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.	Colleges use ACT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.
<b>Test Structure</b>	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Math	English Math Reading Science Reasoning Essay (Optional)
<b>Length</b>	2 hours, 14 minutes	2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay) 3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay)
<b>Evidence-Based Reading and Writing</b>	2 modules	4 reading passages
<b>Science</b>	None	1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge)
<b>Math</b>	Covers: Arithmetic Algebra I & II Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis	Covers: Arithmetic Algebra I & II Geometry, Trigonometry, and Probability & Statistics
<b>Calculator Policy</b>	You can use a calculator on all math questions.	You can use a calculator on all math questions.
<b>Essays</b>	None	Optional. The essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.
<b>How It's Scored</b>	Scored on a scale of 400-1600	Scored on a scale of 1-36

<https://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-act>

## SAT/ACT Score Reporting

It is the responsibility of the student to release and send official test scores to each prospective college. Pomperaug High School **does not** send test scores with a student's transcript.

## Test-Optional

The National Center for Fair & Open Testing (<https://fairtest.org/test-optional-list/>) provides a list of institutions that are "test optional," "test flexible," or otherwise de-emphasize the use of standardized tests in admissions decisions. Please check with the school's

admissions office to learn more about specific admissions requirements for the school or your student's major, particularly for international or non-traditional students.

### Test Prep

- [bluebook.collegeboard.org/](https://bluebook.collegeboard.org/)
- <https://www.khanacademy.org/digital-sat>
- <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/practice>
- <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation.html>
- <https://www.sylvanlearning.com/test-prep/sat/> (location in Southbury)

# Choosing a College

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The college search is an opportunity for you to make decisions about your future and is something you should be excited about! This is an ongoing process that will require self-reflection as you explore what you want to do with your life and what journey you want to take to get there. The more you understand yourself, your strengths, and the things that are important to you, the easier it will be to identify colleges that fit you. It's important to ask yourself the tough questions, research your options, and talk with your family supporters about what schools are the best match for you.

Here are some aspects to consider:

- Location/Distance from home
- Available majors and classes
- Size of school
- Housing options
- Makeup of the student body
- Extracurricular activities
- Campus atmosphere
- Religious affiliation
- Financial costs/aid

Some questions to ask yourself:

- What are your academic interests? What courses have you enjoyed the most?
- How do you learn best? What teaching style or learning environment is best for you?
- Would you be comfortable in large lecture-style classes or is it important for you to be known by your professors?
- Do you want to stay close to home, able to see family and friends on a regular basis, or do you want to experience a different part of the country?
- Which of your extracurricular activities means the most to you? How important is it for those activities to be a part of your college experience?
- What balance of studying, activities and social life suits you best?

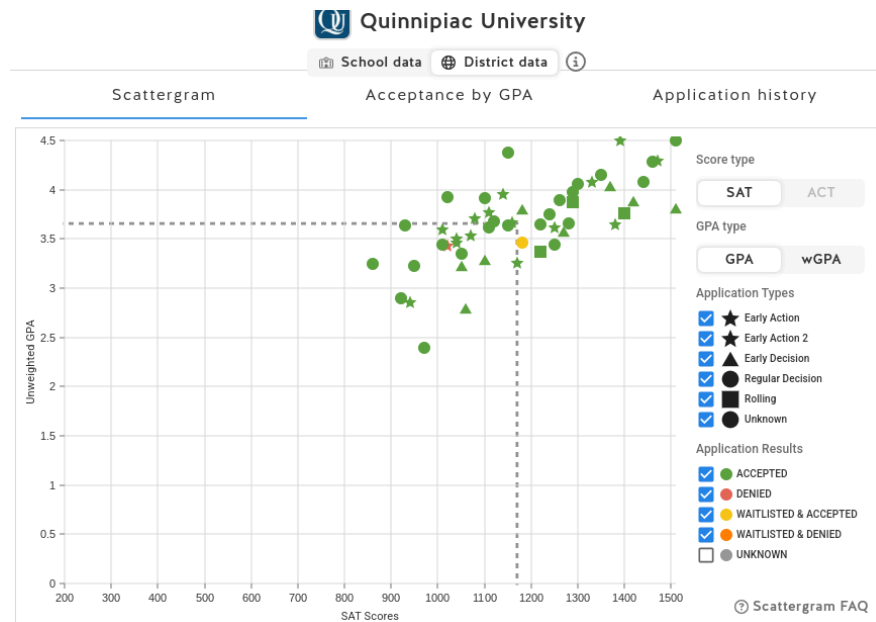
# Creating a Balanced List of Colleges

A balanced college list is a collection of schools that you would like to potentially attend. These should include schools that fall into the reach, target and likely categories outlined below. There is no perfect system to determine your chance of admission to any given school, however there are best practices. To figure out if a school is a reach, target or likely, you can use SchoolLinks to review admission data specific to Pomperaug High School graduates. This data will help you understand the GPA and SAT scores of students who were accepted, waitlisted and denied admission.

**Reach:** A college whose profile indicates the majority of previously admitted freshmen had scores, grades and other activities significantly better than your own. To be admitted to this school may be possible, but it is not a definite occurrence. Highly competitive schools fall into this category due to the extreme competition for a place in the freshman class.

**Target:** A college whose profile indicates the majority of previously admitted freshmen had scores, grades and other activities slightly better or equal to your own. Admission at this college is likely due to the strength of your application and the average demand for a place in the freshman class.

**Likely:** A college whose profile indicates the majority of previously admitted freshmen had scores, grades and other activities that were equal to or less impressive than your own. Admission at this college is highly likely and probably due to the strength of your application.



*Pictured above: Scattergram tool in SchoolLinks, Quinnipiac University*

## SchoolLinks

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Each PHS student has a [SchoolLinks](#) account to help with the post-secondary planning process. Students can take career interest inventories, explore potential colleges, create a resume, and send college application materials. SchoolLinks will allow students and their parents to:

- **Get involved in the planning process** – Build a resume, complete online surveys, and manage timelines and deadlines for making decisions about colleges and careers.
- **Research careers**
- **Research colleges** – Compare GPA, standardized test scores, and other statistics to historical data from past Pomperaug students who have applied.
- **Sign up for college rep. visits** – Find out which colleges are visiting our school and sign up to attend those sessions in person or virtually on SchoolLinks.
- **Research scholarships** – local, regional and national in the Scholarship Matching tool.

**All college materials including high school transcript, school profile, teachers' and counselor's letters of recommendation are sent electronically through SchoolLinks to colleges.**

## Common App Essay Prompts

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Here is the full set of essay prompts for 2025–2026.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design

This is the updated “Challenges and circumstances” question language students will see beginning August 1, 2025.

Sometimes a student’s application and achievements may be impacted by challenges or other circumstances. This could involve:

- Access to a safe and quiet study space
- Access to reliable technology and internet
- Community disruption (violence, protests, teacher strikes, etc.)
- Discrimination
- Family disruptions (divorce, incarceration, job loss, health, loss of a family member, addiction, etc.)
- Family or other obligations (care-taking, financial support, etc.)
- Housing instability, displacement, or homelessness
- Military deployment or activation
- Natural disasters
- Physical health and mental well-being
- War, conflict, or other hardships

If you’re comfortable sharing, this information can help colleges better understand the context of your application. Colleges may use this information to provide you and your fellow students with support and resources.

## Visiting a College Campus

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Visiting a college campus can help you to determine if a college is a good fit for you and it is a good way to demonstrate your interest.

- Browse the college's website, research the college in SchoolLinks, and read campus blogs.
- Attend a group information session and campus tour with Admission Office staff.
- Talk to current students about what they think of their classes and professors.
- Visit the dining hall, fitness center, library, career center, bookstore and other campus facilities.
- Walk or drive around the community surrounding the campus.
- Meet with someone from the department of your prospective major.
- If interested in athletics, speak with the coach.
- Interview, required or recommended (Admission Officer, Alumni, Zoom).
- Read the student newspaper.

When possible, college visit(s) should occur prior to submitting an application for admission.

To read more about planning for a college visit, you can visit the link below.

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/campus-visit-guide/campus-visit-checklist>

# Opportunities to Meet College Representatives

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## College Rep Visits

Admissions Representatives from colleges, universities, trade and technical schools visit PHS throughout the year. Fall Rep Visits run from September through mid-November. Spring Rep Visits run from March through April.

### ☐ Rep Visits- Registration

- Click on the **School** icon and then click on “**Events.**”
- Click on the college visit you would like to attend.
- Click on “Register for this event” and answer the prompts.
- Once registered, pick up an **ORANGE PASS** from the Counseling Office in order to get teacher permission.

### Where to Find Rep Visits Lists

These lists are updated continuously as schools can register to visit at any time.

1. Career Center Website
2. SchoolLinks Events
3. College & Career Center google calendar
4. Instagram @phs\_career\_center
5. TV announcements around school

## College Fairs

### **NACAC Hartford College Fair**

Hartford Convention Center, Hartford

Tuesday, March 17th, 2026: 5:30-8 PM

Wednesday, March 18th, 2026: 9 AM - 1 PM

### **Newtown High School College Fair**

Newtown High School

March 2026 (Date is to be determined)

### **Taft School College Fair**

Athletic Facility on Guernseytown Rd

April 2026 (Date is to be determined)

### **Southern CT College & Career Fair**

Hartford Healthcare Amphitheater, Bridgeport

Wednesday, April 22, 2026: 4:30-7:30 PM

## Other Post-Secondary Options

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If your post-secondary plans do not include attending a 4-year college or university, here are some resources to explore your many options:

### **Connecticut Community Colleges Academic Programs**

- Free Tuition at CT State Community College (previously called PACT)
- Transfer Ticket
- Guaranteed Admission Program (GAP)

### **Gap Year**

This refers to the time between graduating from high school and enrolling in college. During this time, students may engage in volunteer service, travel, internships, competitive sports or academic improvement courses.

- USA Gap Year Fairs
- American Gap Association
- Center For Interim Programs
- GAP Year Fair: West Hartford, CT

### **Military**

Opportunities to meet with recruiting officers are available through the College & Career Center and College Fairs.

- Air Force
- Army
- Marines
- Navy
- ASVAB - Administered in the career center December 2025.

### **Careers/Technical Training**

- [SchoolLinks](#)
- [St of Connecticut Job & Career Connection](#)
- [Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook](#)
- PHS Career Center - <https://phs.region15.org/college-visits/college-career>

## NCAA Initial Eligibility

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If you want to compete in NCAA sports, you need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. The information below from the NCAA Eligibility Center will help guide you through the registration process. Once registered, students must request for an official transcript to be sent from PHS to the Eligibility Center.

[NCAA Eligibility Center](#)

[Division I](#) & [Division II](#) Eligibility Requirements

[NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Athlete](#)

[NCAA Resources](#)

## Additional Resources

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### Books

- Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges
- College Book of Majors by the College Board
- Colleges That Change Lives by Loren Pope
- Who Gets In and Why by Jeffery Selingo

### Apps

- Collegeboard "The Official SAT Question of the Day"
- Peterson's College Guide
- SAT Math Tutor
- Own Your Own Future

### Websites

[College Board](#): College Board online provides information on how to make smart college choices, register and get test dates, practice with real test questions, find the best school for you and how to choose it, write a winning application and apply online, and get financial aid facts.

[Peterson's Online](#): Provides online directories of educational institutions, financial aid sources, career information, and other similar topics.

[Princeton Review](#): Review.com has information on careers, college, grad, law, business, or medical schools and the advice you need to achieve your goals.

[Niche](#): College search platform with student reviews. Research and compare colleges, read student reviews, find scholarships, be considered for Niche Direct Admissions to participating schools.

[The College Tour](#): Students can virtually tour 2,500 four-year colleges and universities and 900 community colleges throughout America.