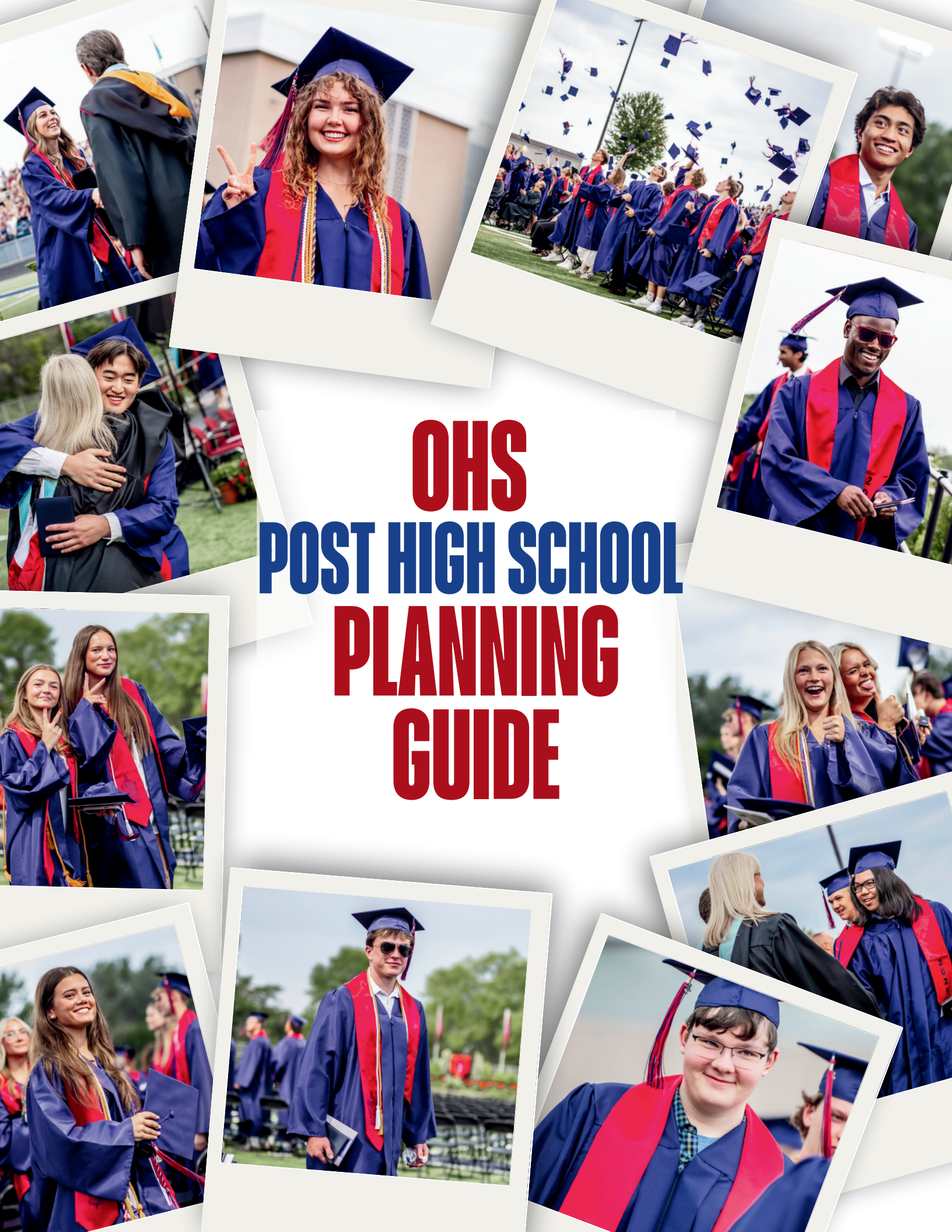

OHS POST HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING GUIDE

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Introduction

Starting from the first day students enter ninth grade, their school counselor is their designated personal adviser helping them navigate their high school journey and forge a path for their future. This booklet is to assist OHS students and parents in their post high school planning process. As school counselors, we will work closely with each student throughout their college search process to help them find colleges that fit their needs and guide them through the application process.

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High School Timeline

Ninth Grade	Tenth Grade
☐ Get to know your school counselor	☐ Meet with school counselor
☐ Take challenging courses	☐ Continue to take challenging courses
☐ Focus on grades	☐ Grades, grades, grades
☐ Continue a foreign language	☐ Put effort into extracurricular activities
☐ Seek out help if you need it	☐ Continue studying a foreign language
☐ Get involved in extracurricular activities	☐ Take the PACT (Practice ACT)
☐ Plan a productive summer	☐ Research and visit colleges
	☐ Plan a productive summer

Eleventh Grade
☐ Meet with your school counselor
☐ In October, take the PSAT
☐ Take advantage of AP and other upper-level course offerings
☐ Keep your grades up
☐ Keep going with a foreign language
☐ Assume a leadership role in an extracurricular activity
☐ In the spring, take the ACT and/or SAT
☐ Research colleges and go on campus visits
☐ In the spring, meet with your school counselor and draft a college list
☐ Take AP exams
☐ Create your academic resume
☐ Plan who you will ask for letters of recommendation
☐ Make the most of your summer

Post High School Options

Four-Year Colleges

A bachelor's degree can open doors and prepare students for financially rewarding careers. Jobs requiring higher education typically pay better than those that don't – although there are always exceptions. With more education, you can expect to have better benefits, better working conditions, and a lower unemployment rate. You also gain many skills employers look for, such as critical thinking, teamwork, time management, research, problem-solving, writing and computer skills.

Community Colleges

Community colleges provide affordable, career-oriented programs, which enable students to begin their careers after only one or two years of college. Students completing one-year programs receive certificates or diplomas, while those completing two-year programs earn associate degrees. Students can also go to a community college for their first year or two, and then transfer to a four-year college, which can be a less expensive and more convenient option for students.

Career and Technical Schools

Career and technical schools offer short-term training in a wide variety of career fields. While some programs last only a few weeks, others take up to two years to complete. Technical schools typically do not offer general coursework and upon completion, the student is ready to enter the workforce.

The Military

The military trains young men and women so that they can protect the interests of our country. The United States military offers qualified graduates a good salary and free job training. They provide discipline and structure, as well as opportunities for career advancement and travel. The military is the nation's single largest employer, and it offers training in over 2,000 job specialties. Students who want to complete their education before serving can apply for an ROTC program or a service academy.
Information on Military Options: (www.careersinthemilitary.com) (www.todaysmilitary.com)

Apprenticeships

Students who prefer a hands-on approach to learning may want to consider this option. Apprentices learn a skilled trade through a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training. These programs are considered by many to be the best way to receive training in the skilled trades.
Information on Apprenticeship Options: (www.doleta.gov) (www.dli.mn.gov)

GAP Year

A post-graduate year is becoming more popular with students as a time for growth and maturation. Students may spend their GAP year traveling to a foreign country, volunteering in the States or abroad, or participating in an enrichment experience. Many colleges will allow a student to defer enrollment for one year but may require the student to reapply if the GAP year extends longer. We encourage you to reach out to the college with your GAP year plans.
Information on GAP Year Programs: (https://tinyurl.com/teenlife-gapyear) (https://www.gooverseas.com/gap-year)

Preparation Requirements

Being ready for college study means adequate preparation in English, social studies, mathematics, and sciences. Most colleges require the study of a second language. The more selective the college, the more preparation they expect in these academic disciplines. Students and parents are encouraged to research the colleges and universities in which they have an interest.

Credits Needed per Institution	OHS Graduation Require-ments	MN State Colleges & Universities	Private Colleges	University of MN: Duluth & Crookston	UMN: Twin Cities & UW: Madison
Language Arts	4	4	4	4	4
Social Studies	3.5	3	3	3	4
Mathematics	3	3	3	3	4
Science	3	3	3	3	3
World Language	–	*2**	*2**	*2**	*2**
Phy. Ed	0.5	–	–	–	–
Health	0.5	–	–	–	–
Art	1	1	–	1	1
Personal Finance**	0.5	-	-	-	-

**While world language is not an OHS graduation requirement, it is an admissions requirement for many colleges and universities. We recommend students take a minimum of two years of the same language.*
*** Class of 2028 and beyond*

Admission Criteria

In addition to college prep coursework, colleges value other criteria when making admission decisions. Those criteria can vary greatly from college to college.

The most commonly top-ranked criteria include:
- Coursework and GPA
- Class rigor (honors, accelerated, AP)
- Standardized test scores (ACT/SAT)

Secondary factors include:
- Extracurricular activities
- Leadership positions
- Volunteering/community service
- Letters of recommendation
- Essays
- Interviews

admission tests

Historically, most four-year colleges and universities require and accept either the ACT or SAT college admission test. During the pandemic, most colleges moved to Test-Optional Admissions and many are continuing those policies, although some are returning to requiring tests. It is important to pay attention to each college's testing policy and make decisions based on what is best for you. School-specific testing policies can be found at www.fairtest.org *www.fairtest.org*, but it is our recommendation that college-bound students register and prepare for either the ACT or SAT during their junior year. Orono offers an opportunity for all juniors to take the ACT in the spring through State/District testing; there is no cost and no registration required for this ACT. For National (Saturday) ACT testing, please visit the testing agency's website for registration. **Orono High School's CEEB Code is 241-410**.

ACT (*www.actstudent.org*)	SAT (*www.collegeboard.com*)
– Offered on a Saturday in September, October, December, February, April, June, and July – The main test is comprised of three *required* sections: English, Math, and Reading – Students may choose to include the optional Science and/or Writing portions of the ACT during the registration process	– Offered on a Saturday in August, October, November, December, March, May, and June – The main test is comprised of Evidence-based Reading and Writing (Reading, Writing, and Language Test), and a Math test

test prep resources

ACT & SAT Prep Websites:
- Winward Academy in MaiaLearning
- Khan Academy (SAT prep)
- MCIS Test Prep - free test prep purchased for all OHS students
- The Princeton Review (*http://www.princetonreview.com/*)
- Orono Community Education Test Prep (*https://ce.oronoschools.org/youth/youth-academic*)

Self Reflection

know yourself first

Self-knowledge is really the first step in the college selection process. Simply asking yourself some key questions will help get you started on this essential step.

How do you learn best?

- Are you an independent learner or do you need direction?
- Are you inquisitive or accepting?
- Do you prefer to work and learn in teams or by yourself, memorizing notes?
- Are you an active or passive learner?
- Do you prefer a structured or unstructured learning environment?

How do you interact with others?

- Are you an initiator or a follower?
- Do you prefer to interact in organized groups with a purpose, or informal groups?
- Do you enjoy meeting other people from a variety of backgrounds, or prefer to be with "people similar to you"?

What are your general education objectives?

- What do you enjoy learning about?
- What do you want to major in?
- What are your plans after college?

Answers to these three simple questions - how do you learn, how do you interact, and what are your general educational objectives - will help you understand yourself, and represent the first step in selecting the right set of colleges.

determine your priorities

You will want to consider your preferences when researching and selecting a college. We encourage you to consider what school criteria are most important to you so you can narrow down your college list to those that match your needs.

- Location of the school (distance from home, climate/geographical region)
- Academic programs offered
- Cost of attendance (tuition, financial aid, scholarships)
- Diversity of student body/student body demographics
- Size of school/size of classes
- Campus setting (large city, small city, large town, small town)
- Type of school: Private vs. public, Religious affiliation, Community/Technical college
- Selectivity and admission requirements
- Graduation rates/Job placement rates
- Advising programs/Availability of disability services
- Extracurricular activities, Greek Life, Sports
- School Calendar (semesters, quarters, block system)

For more self-reflection activities, visit the OHS School Counseling Website and the College Search feature in your MaiaLearning account *(www.maialearning.com)*

Researching Schools

getting to know a college's personality

Colleges have "personalities," just like we do. Following is a list of the typical characteristics to consider:

- Public or private
- Small, mid-sized or large
- Residential or commuter
- Rural, suburban, or urban
- Teaching or research-focused
- Undergraduate or graduate student-focused
- Nurturing or competitive environment
- Hands-on learning, small seminars, community engagement, or lectures
- Diverse or homogeneous population
- Big time athletics or emphasis on the varsity "student-athlete" and intramurals
- Large fraternity/sorority presence or predominantly "independent" campus

So, how do I discover a college's personality?

1. Use multiple sources - never rely exclusively on one source, particularly shortcut sources such as rankings, guidebooks, and word of mouth.
2. Your school counselor - a counselor can help you develop a list of possible colleges that fit your interests, style, and academic profile.
3. Use the Internet - among other things, the Internet is a marketing tool, so be careful. To discover a college's personality, dig down to the academic and department level. See what the English faculty is doing in their classes or what students majoring in public policy do as their projects for example. See how faculty and students do research together. Get a sense of how teachers teach and how students learn.
4. Use email to your advantage - after searching the Internet, email some faculty and students who are doing things that interest you. Also, use email to contact your regional or academic major area admissions representative and introduce yourself by asking a well researched question.
5. Once you have done your homework... visit - after you have a reasonably good picture of how the "personality" and program of a college matches your style and needs, get yourself to campus. Stay overnight, talk with all different kinds of students about their experiences, speak with faculty about their role at the college, and of course speak with the admissions office.
6. Be objective in your assessments - don't include or exclude a college from your list because of what your cousin says, or because your friends have "never heard of that school." You must see the college as a whole; looking at all of its resources to see how it meets your objectives.
7. Choose six to eight "first choices" - select the colleges to which you will apply knowing you would be thrilled to attend any one of them if you are admitted (and if it is affordable). There is plenty of time to rank order after admission, but if you select your colleges right, you can't go wrong when the final decision is in your hands.

(Excerpts taken from College Unranked, Ending the College Admissions Frenzy, Lloyd Thacker)

Finding the Right College Fit

Here are some factors to compare when you are selecting a school:

student enrollment

Enrollment
- Total enrollment
- Percent of undergraduate students
- First year class size

Retention
- Percent of students who graduate in four years

Background
- Gender ratio
- Percent of commuters/residents
- Percent leaving on weekends
- Percent affiliated with a sorority/fraternity
- Percent going on to graduate school
- Geographic origin
- Percent of minority students
- Percent of students with financial aid

location & surroundings

Location
- Geographic region
- Distance from home
- Travel costs and convenience

Setting
- Urban/rural/suburban
- Weather
- Nearest city or countryside
- Recreational opportunities

Facilities
- Library
- Laboratories
- Computing facilities (i.e., WiFi or computers)
- Study and practice rooms
- Fine arts
- Sports
- Student Center
- Dorms
- Security system (i.e., escort services)

admissions

Deadlines
- Application
- Notification of decision
- Reply to offer of admission

Application Requirements
- Fee
- Information forms
- Specific high school courses
- Transcripts
- Evaluations
- Interview

SAT or ACT Tests Requirement
- SAT or ACT?
- Is the writing test required?
- Are the subject tests required?

Admissions Selectivity
- Percentage of applicants offered admission
- Rating of most competitive/highly competitive/competitive
- Average SAT/ACT scores of first years
- Freshman class profile

type & philosophy

Type
- Two or four year
- Church/state/private control
- College or university

Calendar
- Semester/trimester/quarter/module
- Interim program
- Accelerated program

Atmosphere
- Serious or "party" vibe

Philosophy
- Traditional/experimental
- Deeply scholarly/career oriented
- Comprehensive

Purpose
- Liberal arts
- Pre-professional programs
- Technical or vocational institute
- Degrees offered

costs & financial aid

Cost
- Minimum-maximum total costs per year
- Student budget for tuition, fees/room & board/books and personal expenses/travel costs

Financial Aid
- Percentage of students receiving aid
- Range and average of awards
- Merit or need-based funds available
- Loan and work expectations

campus and student life

Types of students
- Diversity and tolerance of differences
- Importance of money/material possessions/social appearances

Living Arrangements
- Predominantly large dorms/housing clusters/small houses/freshman dorms
- Availability of single rooms/double rooms/doubles/suites/multiple rooms
- Coed by floor/room
- System of housing allocation/roommate selection
- Centralized/decentralized dining
- Alternative dining programs

Community Type
- Homogeneous? Pluralistic? Cohesive
- Fragmented?
- School Spirit
- Controversial campus issues
- Liberal/Directive/Restrictive social regulations

Campus Activities
- Activities related to your interest
- Emphasis on social life, fraternities, sororities, sports, or other interests
- Clubs and organizations - traditional/creative/competitive/issue-oriented
- Presence of religious, ethnic, or cultural groups
- Cultural opportunities on campus or in the community

curriculum

Academic Requirements
- Amounts of study devoted to general education, concentration, and electives
- Required freshman courses or curriculum/ distribution requirements in curricular areas/ elective curriculum

Standards
- Accreditation
- Degree requirements
- Grading systems
- Grade distribution
- Honor system

Course Descriptions
- Introductory/advanced/specialized courses
- Courses for major/non-majors
- Number of courses required for a major

Special Study Programs
- Fieldwork
- Internships
- Exchange programs
- Foreign study
- Joint degree programs
- Cooperative work/study plan
- Pre-professional programs

Academic Offerings
- Majors offered
- Breadth and depth of courses offered
- Interdisciplinary courses and majors
- Strength of departments

Independent Study
- Individual tutorial
- Seminars
- Research opportunities

academic environment

Faculty
- Percent with doctorate degrees (e.g., Ph.D.)
- Faculty research/scholarship
- Teaching course load
- Expectations for teaching/ scholarship/ advising
- Emphasis on undergraduate teaching/ learning

Faculty-Student Relationships
- Faculty-student ratio
- Advising
- Accessibility for conferences/assistance
- Departmental clubs, colloquia, and committees with students' reps
- Average class size
- Classes under 20 or over 50 students
- Opportunities for discussion/student presentation/exchange of idea

Intellectual Vitality
- Student attitude toward learning
- Flexibility and structure for study
- Exchange of ideas
- Interest in political, social, or world issues

Career Preparation
- Pre-professional programs
- Career advising and information programs
- Graduate school and job placement

Academic Demands
- Workload
- Course expectations
- Types of assignments
- Academic pressure/competition

Financing Your Education

Just as we encourage our students to research colleges based on their personal preferences and academic profiles, we also encourage them to research the financial aid opportunities at each college and university. Most financial aid options are based on financial need, while some are based on merit (like scholarships). Federal and institutional aid can include assistance through student loans, grants, and work-study. Grants and work-study are referred to as gift aid, where the student does not need to repay the money upon graduation.

researching financial aid

The Go-to Guide for College Financial Aid *(https://finaid.org/)*
- Most comprehensive financial aid resource on the web
- Includes financial aid calculators, articles about common and obscure financial aid situations such as aid for
- International students, bibliographies, etc.

Net Price Calculators
- By law, every college website is required to post a Net Price Calculator that will estimate the cost of attendance at their institution
- We encourage families to use this feature as students narrow down their lists

Reciprocity
- The Minnesota Higher Education Services Office coordinates reciprocity agreements with Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, the Canadian province of Manitoba, and Iowa Lakes Community College for students pay (nonresident) in-state tuition at public universities

Midwest Student Exchange Program *(https://msep.mhec.org/)*
- The Minnesota Higher Education Services Office coordinates reduced tuition agreements with a limited number of public and private colleges in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, and Wisconsin

financial aid forms

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) *(https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa)*
The FAFSA is a form that students and usually their parent(s) must fill out in order to apply for need-based financial aid at virtually all colleges. The FAFSA opens on October 1st and the data required is from Prior Prior Year (PPY) tax information. The IRS offers the Data Retrieval Tool to pull in information to the FAFSA from your PPY Tax forms.

Information you may need to complete the FAFSA:
- Your Social Security number (or a guardian, if you are a dependent student)
- Your driver's license number (if you have one)
- Student and parent income tax returns
- Earnings statements (W-2 forms, recent paycheck stubs)
- Bank and investment account statements
- Records of untaxed income like Social Security, contributions to a 401(k), or tax-deferred pension

CSS Profile *(https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/)*
- Some highly selective schools require an additional financial aid form The CSS Profile Application requires an initial fee to complete it and an additional fee to be submitted to additional colleges

Athletics

National Collegiate Athletic Association

Students who plan to participate in NCAA Division I or Division II institutions MUST REGISTER (ideally during junior year) with the NCAA Eligibility Center. To be certified as an amateur student-athlete, high school students must meet core course, GPA, and ACT/SAT requirements as set by the Eligibility Center. A list of OHS courses that have been approved by the NCAA Eligibility Center can be found at www.eligibilitycenter.org. Our high school code is: 241-410.

More information on NCAA: (www.ncaa.org)

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics

NAIA is another college sports governing organization that includes mostly private colleges. Students must register with NAIA's Eligibility Center and meet core course, GPA, and ACT/SAT requirements.
More information on NCAA: (www.naia.org)

scholarships

There are four main directions to steer your scholarship search.

- Institutional Scholarships from the college/university; scholarships can be based on merit (GPA & ACT score, or talent-based) or departmental (depending on major)
- Orono District Scholarships: available to ***ALL*** seniors; application is a Google form in Schoology, due March 31
- National/Local/Regional Scholarships can be found in MaiaLearning on the Financial Plan tab (*www.maialearning.com*)
- Additional National Scholarships are available to all students who meet the criteria; top search engines for national scholarships include:
    - Easily find scholarships that fit you at *https://www.fastweb.com/*
    - Earn Scholarships for your achievements at *https://www.raise.me/*
    - Find scholarships to help you pay for college at *https://www.appily.com/*

  We also encourage students to research organizations they/parents are affiliated with (e.g., work, church, memberships, etc.)

scholarship scams

The Federal Trade Commission warns consumers about scholarship scams. Scholarship scams promise, for a fee, they can help families access more student aid or charge students for a scholarship search. Warning signs of a scam include:

- Requiring upfront money for an application fee
- Guaranteed winnings
- Typing and spelling errors on applications
- No telephone number for the business
- Requests to respond too quickly
- Requests for personal information (bank information, credit card information)

Campus Visits

The best way to tell if a school really fits you is to visit! Once you have narrowed down your school choices, you should arrange to visit them if possible. These visits can give you a good insight into the "real" school and if it fits you. There are many factors to consider in selecting the best school for you, and it can help to take a checklist with you. A campus visit can range from a quick stop on your way through to an arranged overnight stay. Each college explains its visit options on its website – some require a reservation, and some do not.

campus visit checklist

Look at Equipment and School Facilities ☐ Are the facilities/equipment up-to-date and operating? ☐ Is the equipment similar to what you will be using? ☐ Is the library good for studying and research? ☐ Are the dorms quiet enough for studying? ☐ What is the cafeteria like? ☐ How large or small are the dorm rooms? ☐ What types of furniture are provided/allowed? ☐ Are there plenty of computer labs? ☐ Is there a cost for printing?	Talk with Current Students in the Program ☐ How long have they been in school? ☐ Do they like the program? ☐ Are they learning what they need to know to get a job? ☐ What is their opinion of the instructors? ☐ How much time is needed for studying outside of class? ☐ Are instructors available outside of class? ☐ Have they had any issues with the school, the instructors, or the classes? ☐ What do they like most/least about the school? ☐ How do they spend their free time?
Talk with a Financial Aid Counselor ☐ How much does it cost to attend the college (including ☐ tuition, room and board, fees, etc.)? ☐ What financial aid options are available? ☐ Are there any special financial aid services offered by the college? ☐ Which forms do I need to fill out and what are the deadlines? ☐ Are there school-specific scholarships available? How do I apply?	Talk with Instructors in the Program ☐ What are the academic requirements of the program? ☐ What kinds of courses are offered? ☐ How many students are in the program? ☐ How long does it take most students to complete the program? ☐ How long have they been teaching at the school? ☐ Do they teach full-time or part-time? ☐ What types of activities are they involved in that relate to the field of study? ☐ What types of background do they have in the field?
Sit In on a Class or Two ☐ Do the instructors seem knowledgeable? ☐ Are the students participating in classroom activities? ☐ What kinds of work are the students doing? ☐ How large/small are the classes?	Talk with an Admissions Counselor ☐ What are the admissions requirements at this college? ☐ How do I apply and which forms do I fill out? ☐ When are the important deadlines for admissions? ☐ What are the housing requirements and parking rules? ☐ What types of extracurricular activities are available? ☐ What is the job placement rate of recent graduates?

Resources

Maia Learning

- OHS students have accounts to this college and career research/planning website which allows each student to research his/her learning style, interests, careers, and colleges. In addition to providing insight into themselves, these reports provide careers that might be interesting or a good fit based on the results *(inventories: career interests, work values, learning/productivity, personality style, multiple intelligences)* (www.maialearning.com)

OHS Counseling

OHS counselors are a fantastic resource to help you navigate the college admissions process. They offer comprehensive timelines, reminders, and host events like the "Kick Off to College Planning" and college representative visits! Be sure to check the College Visits Calendar in early fall on the Counseling website.

Career Research

- Career One-Stop (https://www.careeronestop.org/)
- Princeton Review Career Quiz (https://www.princetonreview.com/quiz/career-quiz)
- College Board Career Search (https://tinyurl.com/cb-careersearch)

College Search

- College Navigator (https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/)
- College Data (https://www.collegedata.com/)
- College Board Search (https://tinyurl.com/cb-collegesearch)
- Princeton Review's Counselor-o-Matic (https://tinyurl.com/pc-collegeedu)
- GoCollege (http://www.gocollege.com/)
- Peterson's College Search (https://tinyurl.com/petersons-cs)
- Virtual Campus Tours (https://campustours.com/)

Specialized College Lists

- Historically Black Colleges (https://tinyurl.com/list-hbuc)
- American Medical Colleges (https://careersinmedicine.aamc.org/)
- Independent Colleges of Art (https://www.aicad.org/)
- Accredited Art Schools (https://www.arts-accredit.org/)
- Christian College Search (https://www.cccu.org/)
- Catholic College Search (https://tinyurl.com/cc-search)
- Colleges Admissions Service in the UK (https://www.ucas.com/)
- Study in Canada (https://www.studyincanada.com/)
- Colleges That Change Lives (https://ctcl.org/)

tips for a successful tour

1. Contact the college's Admissions Office well in advance of your intended visit. This will help to ensure that appointments are still available on the date you prefer.
2. MEA and Spring Break are prime times for juniors to visit a college. Many colleges host open houses, special information sessions, and extra campus tours during these very busy weeks. Plan ahead and schedule early!
3. College students are very open to offering their opinions and assistance to visiting high school families. Take advantage of their availability, especially tour guides, to ask any questions you have.
4. Be attentive to the condition of campus buildings, the upkeep of the campus grounds, and how well-equipped you find academic and technology buildings and labs.
5. Pay close attention to what students talk about. Get a sense of what their priorities are at each college.
6. Ask students about the availability of faculty and academic advisors. All colleges like to boast about close faculty/student interaction and support, but it's more a fact at some than at others.
7. Always ask to see typical freshman housing. Most colleges offer quite a range of housing options. Make sure the tour displays both the nicest housing options as well as some of the less desirable options—often reserved for first-year students.
8. A choice of college is a major decision. Tours often highlight a college's strengths. Make sure you probe students to also determine some of the college's weaknesses. Every college has some and you want to make sure they're 'acceptable' weaknesses for you. One good question to ask is, "If you could change one thing about this college, what would it be?"
9. Make some brief notes about each visit, including things you liked and things you didn't particularly like. These notes will be helpful a year from now as decision time approaches. You can find a template in Schoology.

Selecting a College

What should my final list of colleges include?

Inherent in this question are two considerations: first, how many schools should I apply to; and second, what range of admissions selectivity should be represented? Here are some thoughts on both questions.

- Reach Schools: these are your top choice schools – ones that will provide you with the most of your criteria and be the most academically challenging. It is fine to include a few "long shots".
- Target Schools: these are schools that possess the significant features you desire. These schools are also categorized as "realistic" schools.
- Safety Schools: these are schools that have the most features that you desire and at which the probability of admission is "highly likely" to "certain".

Obviously, the schools that qualify as "reach", "target", or "safety" will vary tremendously from student to student. Many college guides will list college admission selectivity. These rankings are based on the credentials of the entering freshman class and are based on class rank, GPA, test scores, and percentage of applicants accepted. Each student has a unique academic and personal profile and should select schools accordingly, making sure the choices include a range of selectivity.

Some things to keep in mind...

- It is important to choose your "safety" schools carefully. These schools should have your most important criteria and be a place where you stand a good chance of being happy and successful.
- The selectivity of any institution is dependent on the size of its applicant pool, which may be affected as much by geographic location, popularity, and reputation as by actual academic quality. A school may be "moderately difficult" from the admission perspective yet offer programs equal to the "top" schools.
- Many state colleges and universities are becoming more and more competitive for in-state and out-of state applicants and should not be considered "safety" choices. Be thorough in investigating admission criteria for state schools.
- Use your judgment when using publications that rank or compare schools on "objective" criteria. You need to make a good choice for you, and a magazine or guide does not include your personal needs in their rankings. Go beyond a school's "reputation," whether it is for academic rigor or the social scene.
- Make your own decisions – a visit to each college you are considering will help your decision immensely.

	Average ACT Score Range	Class Rank	Percent of Applicants Accepted
Most Competitive	29-36	75% ranked in the top 10% of class	30% or fewer
Highly Competitive	26-28	50% ranked in the top 10% of class	60% or fewer
Very Competitive	24-26	75% ranked in the top 50% of class	85% or fewer
Competitive	21-23	*Not crucial*	95% or fewer
Less Competitive	*Not crucial*	*Not crucial*	*All*

Glossary

Academic Index: a calculation based on standardized test scores and class rank (or equivalent) that Ivy League colleges use to ensure that athletic recruits have academic records that exceed a minimum threshold.

ACT: a standardized college admissions test is an alternative to the SAT.

Advanced Placement (AP):

A program coordinated by the College Board whereby high schools offer college-level courses with specific curricula in a large number of academic fields. Participating students have the option of taking an AP exam at the end of the course to demonstrate knowledge and potentially earn college credit.

Associate Degree: a two-year community college degree (Associate of Arts; Associate of Science)

Award Letter: financial aid terminology for the document sent to a financial aid recipient that indicates the amount and type of aid.

Bachelor's Degree: a four-year college degree (Bachelor of Arts; Bachelor of Science)

Candidate Reply Date: postmark the date by which a student must notify a college about his or her intention to enroll. May 1st is the standard date for students admitted via regular decision.

CEEB Number: he individual number that is assigned to your school. OHS's CEEB number is 241-410

Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success: a standardized application form was accepted by about 150 colleges.

Common Application: a standardized application form accepted by over 1,000 colleges. Some colleges also require a school-specific supplement.

Consortium: several colleges join together in a cooperative arrangement that allows students to take courses and use library facilities on each campus.

Core Curriculum: a group of specially designed courses in the humanities, arts, social sciences, and sciences designed to give students a strong foundation in general education.

Cost of Attendance: financial aid terminology for total educational costs, including tuition, fees, books, supplies, room and board, incidentals, and travel home.

CSS Profile: abbreviation for College Scholarship Service profile. A need assessment form administered by the College Board that some schools use to determine eligibility for institutionally based financial aid.

Deferral: a decision by a college to delay a final response to an early action or early decision application until the regular decision cycle.

Deferred Admission: a decision on the part of the admitted student to wait until the following academic year to enroll.

Demonstrated Need: financial aid terminology for the difference between the total cost of attendance and the expected family contribution to the student's education.

Early Action (EA): an application is typically submitted by Nov. 1 or Nov. 15 in exchange for a decision by Dec. 15 that does not bind the student to attend if admitted.

Early Decision (ED): an application is typically submitted by Nov. 1 or Nov. 15 in exchange for a decision by Dec. 15; students commit to attending if admitted through Early Decision; student/parent/counselor sign a binding agreement.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): financial aid terminology for the amount of money a family is expected to contribute to a student's education is based on a methodology that considers income, assets, and other expenses.

FAFSA: abbreviation for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Used to determine eligibility for federal financial aid.

Gift Aid: financial aid terminology for the grant portion of the financial aid package that does not have to be repaid.

GPA: abbreviation for grade point average. An overall average of a student's grades.

Hook: a special quality that gives a student an edge in the admissions process over others with similar academic qualifications. Hooks may include athletic ability, legacy status, exceptional talent, or being part of an underrepresented minority group.

Liberal Arts: an academic program that includes the sciences, social sciences, languages, arts, mathematics, and so forth; is distinguished from professional programs that are focused on specific careers such as engineering, business, or nursing.

MaiaLearning: a web-based Career & College Readiness program that helps students learn about themselves, organize their college, search, communicate their application plans to their School Counselor, and track submissions of school supporting materials

(transcripts, letters of recommendation, etc).

Need-aware Admissions: admissions process that considers a student's ability to pay in the final admissions decision.

Need-blind Admissions: the practice of reviewing an applicant's file and reaching a decision on admission without regard to the student's ability to pay.

Pell Grant: federal grant to students from low-income families.

PACT: a short version of the ACT that serves as practice. At OHS, sophomores take the PACT.

PLUS Loans: abbreviation for Parent Loan to Undergraduate Students. A loan taken out by a parent that is not subsidized by the federal government.

PSAT: abbreviation for Preliminary SAT. A short version of the SAT that is typically taken in the fall by high school juniors as practice for the SAT and as a qualifying test of the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Regular Decision (RD): an application process that involves applying by a late fall or early winter deadline in exchange for an admissions decision the following spring.

Rolling Admission: a process by which colleges review and make decisions about applications as they are received. The application cycle usually opens in the early fall and may extend into the spring or until the freshman class is full.

SAT: standardized test for college admissions.

Secondary School Report (SSR): often called a Counselor Recommendation, many selective colleges and universities require these to be submitted by your high school counselor. Well in advance of the application deadline (allow at least four weeks), you must complete the "Senior Self Appraisal" in Naviance/Family Connection.

Stafford Loan: low-interest loans to students.

Student Aid Report (SAR): official notification from the processing center that gives the results of the need analysis calculated from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Subsidized Loan: a loan for which the US government pays the interest while the student is enrolled in school. Qualification for this loan is based on need.

Transcript: official record of a student's courses and grades. Colleges usually require an official transcript, sent directly from the high school, as part of the application.

Wait List: a group of students is held in reserve through the late spring after a college makes its admission decisions. If openings occur, students on the wait list may be offered admission.

Work-study: a component of need-based financial aid in which the student works part-time on campus or another job that is supported by government or institutional funding.

COLLEGE
CAREER
CENTER
Skills
Knowledge
and Parts of the Application
OFFICE