Bound for College. Prepared for Life.

COLLEGE PLANNING

2026/2027



WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear Classes of 2027 & 2028,

And so it begins! Your senior or junior year of high school. I look forward to working with each of you as we navigate the college research, application and selection process. Remember, sometimes the journey is just as exciting as arriving at the final destination.

This handbook is meant to serve as a guide to students and parents during this journey. I hope you will find the information helpful.

My door is always open! Let me know how I can help.

Suzanne Davidson
Director of College Counseling & Alumni Affairs

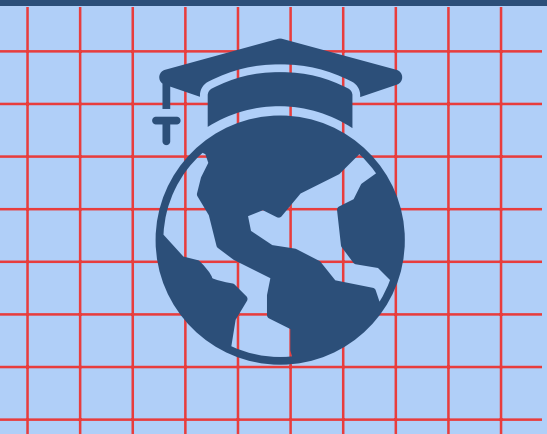


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IMPORTANT ACT DATES

ACT 2026-2027 Dates

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Fee Deadline
September 19, 2026	August 14, 2026	September 1, 2026
October 17, 2026	September 11, 2026	September 29, 2026
December 12, 2026	November 6, 2026	November 29, 2026
February 27, 2027	January 22, 2027	February 9, 2027
April 10, 2027	March 5, 2027	March 23, 2027
June 12, 2027	May 7, 2027	May 25, 2027
July 10, 2027	June 4, 2027	June 22, 2027

My Answer Key (formerly TIR - Test Information Release.) If you take the ACT in September, October, December, April or June, you can request a copy of your questions and answers for up to 6 months after the test date, to use as prep for your next ACT test.

IMPORTANT DATES & TO-DO-LIST FOR SENIORS

August 2026

- Log into SCOIR, take quizes and research schools. Add colleges, remove colleges or move columns.
- Take a look at the CommonApp or some collage applications to get a feel for what information you will need to gather.
- Continue touring colleges and reaching out to college representatives.
- Complete the TN Promise Application.
- TRA College Fair - Tuesday, August 25

September 2026

- Look for other local college fairs
- Begin narrowing down your list of colleges.

October 2026

- FAFSA Opens
- Remember to move your “applied” schools to the applied column in SCOIR. That is how transcripts will be sent.

November 2026

- November 1 - Tennessee Promise Application Deadline

December 2026-February 2027

- Attend Mandatory Online TN Promise Meeting

March 2027

- Complete local and school sponsored scholarship applications.

April 2027

- Complete Summer TN Promise Community Service Hours
- Keep your grades up! Colleges will get a final transcript!

July 2027

- Complete Fall TN Promise Community Service Hours

CHOOSING A COLLEGE

Choosing a college takes self-reflection. You will want to ask yourself some important questions while finding the "best fit" school.

Consider these questions:

Do I want to be close to home or do I want to go away? Do I want to be in a city, suburban or rural setting? Do I want to live on campus?

Do I want to be challenged academically or do I want a less pressured academic experience?

Do I learn better in a smaller environment (class size and campus) or am I okay blending in?

How do I weigh the importance of social opportunities vs the acdemic focus?

Do I have personal interests/hobbies/talents that I want to continue to grow over the next four years?

Finding the right fit is personal. It may not be your parents' college or where your best friends are going.

A good fit will:

- Offer your major of choice or a wide variety of offerings if you don't know.
- Provide a style of learning that suites your needs and match your academic rigor abilities.
- Be financially feasable for your family.
- Feel comfortable, safe and like home. Offers the extra-curricular activities you desire.
- Meet your spiritual needs.

TYPYES OF ADMISSION

Regular Decision

The application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specific date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time. Students may apply to other colleges without restriction.

Rolling Admission

The application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are submitted and renders admission decisions to students throughout the admission cycle. Students may apply to other colleges without restriction.

Early Action

The application process in which students apply to a college of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the college's regular response date. Colleges may place restrictions on early action applications. If so, they will be clearly stated. Students who are admitted under Early Action are not obligated to accept the offer or submit a deposit.

Early Decision

The application process in which students make a commitment to a first-choice college where, if admitted, they are "bound" to attend. Students may apply to other colleges, but can only have one early decision application pending at a time. It is important to consider if the college offers an "out" policy if the financial aid award is not sufficient to cover attendance. Early Decision could prevent you from comparing financial aid offers from other colleges before making a decision.

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

CEEB Code: 431553

This is TRA's code that students will be asked to supply during the search and application process.

Students will apply to colleges either:

- Through the Common App
  - The Common App allows you to apply to multiple schools at once.
  - Over 1,000 colleges and universities around the world accept the Common App.
  - You are not required to use the Common App should you prefer another application System. It is recommended if you have multiple schools that use Common App.

- Directly through the school

<u>There is no advantage/disadvantage to apply any way listed above...</u>

We are pleased to share that we've implemented a new College & Career Readiness platform called **SCOIR** (pronounced "score"). This system will streamline the process of requesting, processing, sending, and tracking the electronic delivery of all application-related documents. SCOIR's features will help keep everyone informed and engaged throughout the college application process.

PARENTS: DO NOT complete your child's college application for them!!!

TN DIRECT ADMISSIONS

POWERED BY TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Tennessee Expands Direct Admissions Statewide
TN Promise Application Opens Early on April 1 for the Class of 2027

TN DIRECT ADMISSIONS SIMPLIFIES THE PATH TO COLLEGE AND TECHNICAL TRAINING



For the Class of 2027**, all eligible Tennessee Promise applicants will receive a TN Direct Admissions letter from Governor Bill Lee**. All letters will include a list of the colleges and technical schools where students have been accepted and the estimated grants and scholarships they are on track to receive at each.

Expected to reach roughly 70,000 public, private, and homeschool students statewide, TN Direct Admissions offers personalized admissions and financial aid information without having to apply, or pay application fees, to **more than 60 colleges and technical schools across the state**. To participate in TN Direct Admissions, a student must complete the TN Promise application and be eligible for state aid.

PROJECTED TIMELINE

- **April 1,2026 - TN Promise application opens for juniors.**
- **May 26, 2026 - Secure portal opens for 6th semester HOPE GPA upload (State Uniform Grading Policy).**
- **August 17, 2026 – GPA upload deadline for 1st round of letters. Mid-September arrival.**
- **September 8, 2026 - 2nd round GPA deadline. Early October arrival.**
- **October 5, 2026 - 3rd round GPA deadline. Early November arrival.**
- **November 2, 2026 - TN Promise application closes. Final round GPA deadline. Late November arrival.**

UPDATES AT A GLANCE

The new timeline offers distinct benefits for students and school districts:

- **Provides a convenient touchpoint for college planning conversations in the junior year.**
- **Juniors applying for the state's dual enrollment grant in the spring can complete their TN Promise application at the same time.**
- **Arrival of letters aligning with TN College Application & Exploration Month in September allows fall college fairs and campus visits to focus on real choices, not uncertainty.**

SCAN HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TN DIRECT ADMISSIONS

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT COLLEGEFORTN.ORG/DIRECT-ADMISSIONS/ OR EMAIL DIRECT.ADMISSIONS@TN.GOV

SCOIR GUIDE

On SCOIR, colleges come to life through pictures, videos, virtual tours, and links that highlight active student clubs and organizations. This better enables students to discover for and identify colleges and careers that are a good fit with their personal and academic interests, which increases college retention. SCOIR also provides parents and guardians with useful financial calculators so you can determine the likely cost of attendance at different colleges and consider affordability when deciding where to apply.

Students and parents will each have their own individual username and password to access the student's SCOIR information.

Once a student completes the following steps in SCOIR, **transcripts** will be sent directly to the institution:

- Log into SCOIR
- Click on "MY COLLEGES"
- Either drag the college from the "following" column to the "applied" column, or click "Add a College" under the "applied" column.
- Once a college is in the "applied" column, an email will be sent to Mrs. Suzanne to send a transcript.

Students will also request **teacher recommendation letters** through SCOIR by doing the following:

- Click on "MY COLLEGES"
- Click the "Application Documents" Button
- Click the "Request a Teacher Recommendation" and type in the teacher name.
- Once the teacher completes the request, the student will receive an email notification.

REMEMBER: Your ACT scores must be sent directly to the college officially through the ACT portal. The school can not send your scores.

INTERACTIVE OPPORTUNITIES

College Fair

Although college tours are the best way to learn more about a school you are really interested in, a College Fair can be the next best option. It is a way to talk face-to-face with people from different colleges. A College Fair is set up so that students have a browsing session to talk to college representatives and pick up information. This is invaluable for the college selection process, and it is also important to remember the college representatives who attend our College Fair as they are usually the representatives who evaluate our students' college applications to that particular institution. After the College Fair, it would be helpful if students and parents sit down with all the information gathered at the College Fair to compare the different schools.

College Rep Visits

Many college institutions come to Tipton-Rosemark for a scheduled visit during break or lunch in the school day throughout the year. These visits are announced during the daily announcements as well as posted in SCOIR. The meetings will only be for the duration of the break or lunch periods, so the student will not miss an entire class period. The college representatives could be the same from the College Fair, so it's just as important to put the same amount of effort into your conversations as you would during the College Fair.

College Tours

We encourage students and parents to tour colleges as a family. Many college institutions have preview days throughout the school year, or students can register online for individual college visits. These are very beneficial to attend. There is no substitute for visiting the student's potential alma mater, experiencing the size, the friendliness, the location, and the arrangement of the buildings. Students are allowed 3 excused college days. The proper procedure for ensuring an excused absence for a college tour is to complete the request form ahead of time and submit proof of attendance either prior or after the absence.

A list of suggested questions for a college tour can be found on the next page.

WHAT TO ASK ON A TOUR

And How to Ask the Questions

Don't ask your student tour guide questions that can easily be found online. Instead, take advantage of the opportunity to get the inside scoop! Consider asking questions in a way that will encourage your student tour guide to give personalized answers rather than rehearsed responses.

Instead of: How's the food?	Try: How often do you eat on campus? Where is your favorite place to eat on campus?
Instead of: What's parking like on campus?	Try: Do you/have you always had a car on campus? Have you ever been late to class because you couldn't find a parking spot? Can you always find a parking spot in front of your dorm?
Instead of: Is the campus safe?	Try: Have you ever experienced a time on campus when you didn't feel safe? What's the scariest thing that's happened on campus since you've been here?
Instead of: What's the student / teacher ratio?	Try: Have you taken many classes taught by an assistant rather than a professor? Do you think your professors know who you are? How large was your largest class freshman year? What has been your smallest class size?
Instead of: What's the retention rate?	Try: Did you have friends leave after freshman year and why? What is something you wish someone had told you before you picked this school? What was the hardest part of your transition to this school? Is there a type of person you don't see succeeding here?
Instead of: What kind of support services are available?	Try: What steps are taken to address mental health on campus? Have you visited the campus health facility and did you receive good care? Do you work well with your advisor?
Instead of: What would you change about the school?	Try: What is a common critque about the school? What does this college offer that is cutting edge? Would you choose this school if you could start college over?

SCHOLARSHIPS

It is important to understand that every college handles scholarships differently. Some college applications for admission qualify you to be considered for scholarships, while other colleges have a separate scholarship application. PLEASE reach out to the admissions counselor or scholarship office at the colleges! They are your best resource.

TRA School Sponsored Scholarships

I will coordinate several scholarships sponsored by organizations or individuals associated with TRA. Students are required to apply for at least one of these scholarships through their English class. Multiple scholarship applications are encouraged! These scholarship dollars will be sent from the business office directly to the college once the student provides a schedule and student ID#. These one-time scholarships range from $500 to $2,500 include:

- Alumni (Parent must be TRA alumni)
- Booster Club (One Male/One Female)
- FAME (Visual, Vocal, Performing)
- PTO
- Gail Davidson Memorial
- Alicia Hornsby Memorial - Female
- Terry Roland
- Vaughn Family

I will also coordinate with a few local scholarships. The funds associated with these scholarships will come directly from the organization. A few of these include: Baptist Hospital Covington (health related major), Kiwanis Club, Farm Bureau. They will be listed on the guidance page of the website.

The South Tipton County Chamber of Commerce and Patriot Bank sponsor a Student of the Month program. Students from TRA, Brighton and Munford are selected by teachers and acknowledged each month during a breakfast. In May they sponsor a Student of the Year Breakfast. During this breakfast a Student of the Year is announced from each school. The TRA Student of the Year is awarded a $1,000 scholarship.

Types of Scholarships

Scholarships fall into two categories: **private** or **institutional**. A private scholarship program is sponsored by private organizations such as corporations, local businesses, community organizations, or even individuals. Institutional scholarships are supported by the state, local, or federal government or by an educational institution like the college or university itself.

- Merit Scholarships
- Competitive Scholarships
- Department Scholarships
- State Scholarships

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarship Tips

- Observe deadlines and strive to submit applications early.
- Do not rush through the application process. Scholarships are typically individualized by the awarding organization and they are looking for personalized responses.
- Only apply if you meet the scholarship's minimum requirements.
- Follow instructions carefully. Re-read the instructions.
- Only include requested information.
- If the application includes "optional" requirements - do them!
- Proofread your application carefully. Ask a parent to proof your application.
- Keep copies of everything.
- Follow up when appropriate.
- Make note of one-time vs renewable scholarships.
- If the scholarship application requests social media links - clean it up!

Please note: I will compile all scholarship dollars to announce during graduation. Please let me know about any and all scholarships you receive.



OPTIONAL TESTING

What to do?

Some colleges are test-optional. What does this mean?

There are certain colleges that allow applicants to decide whether or not to submit standardized test scores as part of their application. This practice became popular during Covid (2020) and a few schools continue to adopt this application process. However, the number of test optional schools continues to decline each year. For example: Auburn is "phasing out" test optional for 2026 and will only consider a limited number of students to be admitted without test scores. Scores will be required in 2027.

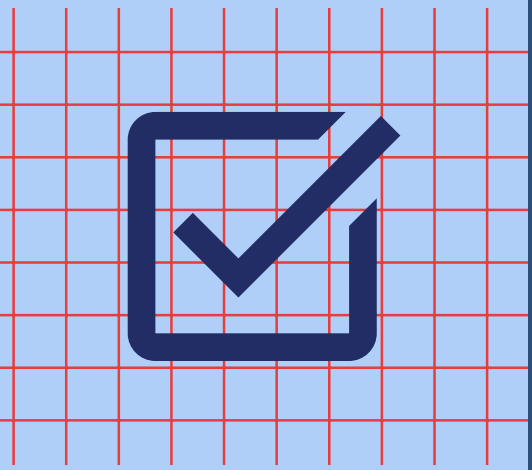
What kind of academic profile would I need?

- If you are planning not to submit SAT or ACT scores to a prospective college, ask yourself--what other components of my application stand out? Determine whether your grades, essays, and/or extracurricular record can truly distinguish you as an applicant and will inspire your prospective colleges to vote "Yes."
- These application materials will be even more heavily scrutinized now that your admissions officers are without an essential piece of information, which although biased, can still provide for meaningful comparisons between you and the rest of the applicant pool.
- A test score-free application is going to be transcript-reliant. Colleges will rely heavily on the high school's profile (submitted with transcripts) to compare honors/AP/Dual Enrollment offerings and rigor.
- When in doubt... ASK!

RESPONSIBILITIES

Guidance Department

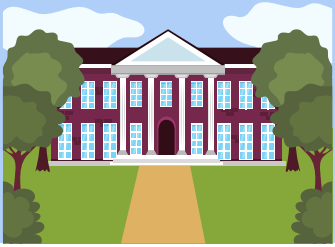
- Sending Transcript Requests
- Sending Counselor and/or Teacher Recommendation Letters
- Provide assistance with the entire college application process



Student

- The Application
  - Types of Admission/Applications/ Decisions/Deadlines
- Application Fee
- Essay, short answers
- ACT/SAT scores sent to colleges (myact.org)
- Properly request transcripts and recommendation letters using the SCOIR System
- Keeping up with deadlines: admission and scholarship
- Putting everything into SCOIR! Be sure this is correct. Come ask for help!
- CHECKING EMAIL

GLOSSARY OF TERMS



Academic Index: A tool used by some admissions offices to quantify a student's application and to help assess an applicant's strength based on numerical data such as GPA, class rank and test scores.

Acceptance Rate: Calculated based on the percentage of applicants who are admitted. If a school has many applicants, the acceptance rate will be lower.

Application Deadline: The date, set by the college admissions offices, after which applications for admission are not accepted.

Award Letter: A letter from the college stating the type and amount of financial aid the school is willing to provide to a student.

Campus Visit/Tour: A service by the college admissions office for prospective students allowing them to visit various campus buildings, meet key institutional personnel, and get a first hand look at the campus.

College Rep Visit: When a college admissions representative visits the school for the purpose of recruitment. The representative will have a table in the multi-purpose room during lunch.

Common Application: Informally knows as Common App makes it possible for students to submit one online application to several schools. The new edition is released each year on August 1.

Concentration: A more focused area of study within a major.

Deferred Admission: A category of admission used in conjunction with early (action, decision) plans to indicate that a student has not been admitted early but will remain in the applicant pool for reconsideration during the regular admissions process.

Demonstrated Interest: The active steps an applicant takes to show their genuine interest in attending a particular college. Some college track demonstrated interest as part of their admissions process.

Demonstrated Need: The difference between the cost of attending a college and your expected family contribution.

Early Action: Applying for admissions early (before the regular deadline) and receives notice of acceptance, denial or deferent with no obligation to the college to enroll, if accepted for admission.

Early Action (non-binding): Application deadline earlier than regular application dates (opens in the fall) and students are given a decision before spring. If accepted, you are NOT obligated to attend.

Early Decision (binding): Students are willing to commit to a school if accepted. The application is submitted well before the general admissions deadline (usually November) and are given a decision around Mid-December. If accepted, the student must enroll in that school.

Expected Family Contribution: An amount that a student and parents can reasonably be expected to contribute toward college costs. For federal aid purposes, this is computed according to federal guidelines. The EFC is subtracted from the total cost of attendance to arrive at an estimate of a student's demonstrated need.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): A federal form required of all students who wish to apply for need-based financial aid, including grants, loans and work-study awards.

FERPA (Federal Educational Rights & Privacy Act): Regulates the privacy of student records and academic information. You will be asked to waive your right to review any letter of recommendation. This lets the college know that you will not be reading these letters and allows for an honest, candid assessment from the teacher. It is highly recommended to waive your FERPA rights for letters of recommendation.

First Generation Student: A student whose parents have no college experience.

GPA (Grade Point Average): Quantitive measure of a student's grades. The GPA is figured by averaging the numerical value of a student's grades. PULL GPA INFO FROM HANDBOOK

Land Grant Institutions: A land-grant college or university is an institution that has been designated by its state legislature or Congress to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, or the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994.

Letter of Intent: A letter signed by a recruited student-athlete to commit to a Division I or II college.

Liberal Arts College: A college that emphasizes broad general knowledge. These colleges generally offer a Bachelor of Arts degree and focus on the humanities, the sciences and the social sciences.

Major: A student's concentrated field of study.

Merit Based Scholarship: Based on academic achievement, leadership, etc and does not depend on financial need. These scholarships can be stacked.

Minor: A student's secondary field of study.

Pell Grant: Eligibility is based on Federal Methodology, varies, is subject to Congressional appropriations and reduced if the student is not full time.

Prerequisite: A course that must be taken prior to enrollment in another course.

Private College: Privately funded institutions (funded by tuition, endowments and donations).

Public College: Secular institutions funded by state governments.

Reach School: A college you have a chance of getting into, but your test scores, GPA, or resume might be a little low when compared to their school profile.

Recommendation Letter: Letter written by a teacher, school counselor or other individual who assesses and endorses a student's qualifications, character, and suitability for admissions. It provides an external perspective on the student and aims to offer insight into their strengths, capabilities, and overall character and aids in the decision making process of the selection committee. Required by most colleges.

Rolling Admission: Practice used by colleges to review and complete applications as they arrive, rather than according to a set date. Typically a decision is received within a few weeks.

Safety School: A college where you clearly meet the admission requirements; minimum GPA, test scores, etc.

SCOIR: The college admission platform we are using at TRA. The program manages students' search and application process. Parents have an account as well.

School Profile: This is an overview of TRA's program, grading system, course offerings and other pertinent information that we submit to admissions offices along with your transcript. This gives the admissions team an idea of how you compete to students from other high schools.

Subsidized Loans: Needs-based loans with interest paid by the government and payments deferred as long as the student is enrolled in a post-secondary school.

Test Blind: Colleges that do not consider standardized test scores at all.

Test Optional: Schools that allow applicants to decide whether or not to submit standardized test scores as part of their application. Be careful - schools that have been test optional are moving back to requiring test scores.

Transcript: This is the official document containing the record of a student's academic performance and testing history. Official transcripts are issued by TRA to the college.

Unsubsidized Loan: The government does NOT pay interest while the student is enrolled. The student has the option to either pay the interest monthly or allow the interest to capitalize. Payments typically begin six months after graduation.

Waitlist: Applicant will have the opportunity to enroll only if there is space available after fully admitted students have responded to their enrollment offers.

Work-Study Program: a program that offers students part-time jobs in order to provide financial assistance or work experience

Yield Rate (Enrollment Rate): Reflects the percentage of students who accept a school's offer and choose to enroll.