The College Application Process

CHS Counseling Department Presentation for Parents
2026 Open House
Wednesday, August 26th

POSTSECONDARY OPTIONS

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity created a Post-Graduation Opportunities Informational Packet. You can find a lot of useful information there:

https://pathfinder.mitalent.org/resources

- College Information
- Financial Aid
- Getting A Job
- Serving the community or the Country
- Skills Assessment
- Earning college credit in high school
- Additional Training Resources

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS AT CHS

We will have a senior class meeting on the 10th of September with instructions for the students.

Then counselors meet individually with each senior to guide them through the mechanics of the application process.

The objective of this parent evening is to give you a sense of the timeline for this year and a general overview of the application process as well as an introduction to financial aid.

TIMELINE

College Application Month: **October**

Earliest Deadline: Early Action or Early Decision, **November 1st**

Applying for Financial Aid - FAFSA Free Application for Federal Student Aid - Opens on **October 1st**; preferred deadline **March 1st**

College Decision Day: **May 1st**

Students submit applications in fall and apply for financial aid. Colleges send a decision and a financial aid package. Students and families decide which is the best offer/best fit for the student and communicate a decision to the colleges by May 1st (or earlier to secure the best housing).

COLLEGE VISITS: VISITING CAMPUS AND/OR AT CHS

- As seniors, students can miss three days of school for three college visits. In order to be excused as a School-Related Absence, the paperwork MUST be filled out in advance of the visit. Pick up the form in the counseling office.
- Encourage your students to attend college visits at CHS! Many colleges come and visit in the fall in the counseling career room.
- Students sign up for CHS visits in Naviance, then they receive a pass on the morning of the visit.
- Encourage your students to log into Naviance (no user name and password, it is a single sign on process connected to their CHS email) and add colleges to the list: “Colleges I am Thinking About” - this will allow them to receive automatic email invitations when reps from those colleges visit CHS!

COLLEGE VISITS AT CHS

Check here for an updated list in real time, as more visits are scheduled: https://chs.chelseaschools.org/counseling-office/college-visits

- Kenyon College on Thursday, September 17th - 8:00 am
- Northwestern University on Friday, September 18th - 8:00 am
- University of Detroit Mercy on Friday, September 18th - 12:30 pm
- Oakland University on Tuesday, September 29th - 9:20 am
- Madonna University on Tuesday, September 29th - 12:30 pm
- University of Michigan - Ann Arbor on Thursday, October 1st - 1:40 pm
- Central Michigan University on Monday, October 5th - 12:30 pm
- University of Michigan-Dearborn on Friday, October 9th - 9:20 am
- Kettering University on Friday, October 9th - 12:30 pm
- Lawrence Tech University on Tuesday, October 13th - 12:30 pm
- Hope College on Monday, October 19th - 9:20 am
- St. Mary's College, Notre Dame (IN) on Tuesday, October 20th - 8:00 am
- University of Michigan-Flint on Tuesday, November 3rd - 1:40 pm
- Grand Valley State University on Friday, November 6th - 1:40 pm

How Many Colleges Do Students Typically Apply To?

Most students apply to 4 - 8 colleges, but if your student has only a couple of favorites and they are a match for their qualifications, that is totally fine.

Many applications are free during college application month. Applying with one Common App makes it easy to apply to several colleges. But there is work involved in setting up a portal for each school and looking for school specific scholarships after being admitted.

Go to colleges websites to find information about the last admitted freshman class: average GPA, average SAT scores.

Reach Schools: the average GPA and SAT scores are higher than your student’s

Target Schools: the average GPA and SAT scores are a match for your student’s

Safe Schools: the average GPA and SAT scores are lower than your student’s scores

COLLEGE APPLICATION ELEMENTS

1) The **application** itself: could be directly on the institution's website, or via Common App - check the college's website to see what they require. This has to be completed by your student.
2) The **application fee** (or waiver code if during college application month). Please note: if your senior qualifies for a free or reduced lunch at school, they can get fee waivers for all college applications!

The Chelsea School District will offer free breakfast and lunch to all students through the Michigan School Meals program during the 2026–2027 school year. We still encourage all families to apply for free and reduced-price meal benefits. Applications can be completed online at chelsea.familyportal.cloud or by scanning the QR code.
Students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals may also be eligible for additional benefits, including free college applications throughout the year, free SAT retakes, and free SAT score sends.

COLLEGE APPLICATION ELEMENTS, continued

3) The **Official High School Transcript** - needs to be requested via Naviance.

4) **SAT Scores** - optional for many colleges; if your student decides to share them with the college, they must be ordered by your student directly from the College Board Website

5) Some college applications require an **essay**

COLLEGE APPLICATION ELEMENTS, continued

6) Some colleges require **letters of recommendation**: your student needs to check if letters of recommendation are required, how many letters are required and who should the letters be written by - some colleges only require teacher letters; others require a letter from the counselor too

If letters are not required, but your student has a particular situation that happened and needs to be explained, they can ask their counselor

Remind your students to give at least 2 weeks time to the recommender to write a letter

The person who is going to write the letter for them might need additional information; please make sure they submit the requested information in a timely manner. Students need to request letters by having a conversation with their recommender first, then they need to officially invite them through Naviance

APPLICATION PROCESS TYPES

Rolling Admission: can apply anytime and will receive a decision within about 1 month of the application. Examples: Central Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University, Ferris, Grand Valley, Lake Superior State, Michigan Tech, Northern Michigan University, Oakland, Saginaw Valley, U-M Dearborn, U-M Flint, Wayne State, Western Michigan.

Early Action (EA): Examples: University of Michigan Ann Arbor and Michigan State University. It is an option for an early application. The deadline is November 1. When Early Action is available, meeting that deadline gives you a better chance at admission.

Regular Decision (RD): after Nov. 1st, , you can apply by the Regular Decision deadline. Example:, U-M Ann Arbor and MSU have a regular decision deadline on Feb 1st.

Early Decision (ED): an option available at some selective universities. Examples: NEW: University of Michigan, University of Chicago, Harvard, Yale. It is a **binding** application process by which you commit to enrolling in a certain college if you're admitted. You can apply to other colleges, but only apply ED to one college. If admitted, you must withdraw your other applications. It requires a student signature, a parent signature and a counselor signature. Use the net price calculator on the University's website to see what the price would be for you.

COMMON APP VS. DIRECT APPLICATION ON WEBSITE

- If the option of using the Common App is available and your senior is planning on applying to several colleges that use the Common App, it is very convenient to use.
- Sometimes it is faster and easier to apply directly to the institution - if your senior only plans to submit one application for example.
- Some colleges do not use Common App at all. They will have your senior apply directly on their website.
- We will help your senior connect the Common App to Naviance, so that everything is processed through Naviance on our end.
- All college applications at CHS must go through Naviance.

COMMUNICATION FROM COLLEGES

- Colleges will only communicate directly with seniors.
- Due to privacy laws, they will not disclose information to parents or counselors.
- Please remind your senior to open and read carefully all the emails they receive from their colleges.
- Right after submitting the application, colleges will start sending various instructions for next steps: create applicant portal, check on admission status, etc.
- After the student decides which college they will attend, they need to follow the to-do lists that the college emails them: send a deposit for housing, attend orientation, sign up for classes

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Money that does not need to be paid back: **grants** - for those who have financial need; **scholarships**; **work study** programs

Money that has to be paid back: federal loans, private loans, parent loans

Sources of financial aid:

1. The college itself
2. The Federal Government
3. The State of Michigan
4. Private scholarships

If cost is the primary concern, a good option is to consider a community college for the first 2 years, then transfer to a 4-year university to complete the Bachelor's degree. New:

- The Community College Guarantee helps recent high school graduates earn a skill certificate or associate degree at their local community college **tuition-free**!
- **All recent Michigan high school graduates** are eligible—regardless of family income.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

- Everyone should fill out a FAFSA, even if you think your family will not qualify for financial aid:
  - The FAFSA isn’t just for people who want or need federal student loans. Its purpose is also to determine aid you won't have to pay back, like college scholarships (merit scholarships), grants, and even work-study funding.
  - Some private scholarships require a FAFSA as part of their application process. That's why completing one is so important!
- Opens on **October 1st**; preferred deadline **March 1st** (for State Aid)
- Financial Aid Night at CHS: Tuesday September 15th at 6:30 pm - more in depth information about affording college

FINANCIAL AID *Night*

FOR 12TH GRADE STUDENTS & FAMILIES



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15TH

CHELSEA HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER

6:30 PM

The University of Michigan Office of Financial Aid

TOPICS WILL INCLUDE:

- OVERVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL AID PROCESS
- TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID
- FAFSA COMPLETION
- FAMILY FINANCIAL PLANNING

CHELSEA HIGH SCHOOL
COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

SCHOLARSHIPS - national scholarships search engines

National scholarships - your senior can start looking now!

https://www.fastweb.com/college-scholarships

https://studentscholarships.org/

https://scholarshipamerica.org/

https://www.scholarships.com/

https://www.appily.com/ (Used to be called Cappex)

https://www.niche.com/colleges/scholarships/

https://www.sallie.com/scholarships

https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/bigfuture-scholarships

https://www.petersons.com/scholarship-search.aspx

https://www.unigo.com/

https://scholarships360.org/

https://bold.org/applicants/

https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Training/find-scholarships.aspx

https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/scholarships

Michigan Scholarships:

https://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid/programs

https://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid/students-families/mi-scholarship-search

SCHOLARSHIPS - State of Michigan

https://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid/programs

- Children of Veterans Tuition Grant
- Fostering Futures Scholarship
- Michigan Achievement Scholarship (eligible if the Student Aid Index is 30,000 or less)
- Police Officer's and Fire Fighter's Survivor Tuition Grant
- Tuition Incentive Program (TIP)

SCHOLARSHIPS - Local

These applications will become available in January, February, March and April.

Mr. Mann will run a senior meeting in January to talk about local scholarships.

We advertise them from the counseling office, through announcements and during lunches. Mrs. Kay also creates a scholarship opportunity wall that your students can consult outside of our office.

All the information is on our website - go to the CHS website, click on Counseling Office on the right, then click on “Senior Class Information, College Application, Financial Aid & Scholarships”

Questions about Local Scholarships? Reach out to Mr. Mann

University	*First-Year Class Size*	*First-Year Class Average GPA*	*First-Year Class Ave. Test Score*	*Tuition*	*Housing and Food*
Central Michigan University	2222	3.52	SAT: 1084	$14,970 for all U.S. residents (same for out-of-state)	$12,628
Eastern Michigan University	1604	3.32	SAT: 1040	$16,684 (same for out-of-state)	$13,652
Ferris State University	1689	3.30	ACT: 22 SAT: 1015	$15,400 (same for out-of-state)	$12,035
Grand Valley State University	4500	3.46	ACT: 24 SAT: 1069	In-state: $16,122 Out-of-state: $22,770	$10,788
Lake Superior State University	350	3.21	N/A	$15,096 (Worldwide "One Rate" Tuition)	$11,781

University	*First-Year Class Size*	*First-Year Class Average GPA*	*First-Year Class Ave. Test Score*	*Tuition*	*Housing and Food*
Michigan State University	9500	3.74	ACT: 28 SAT: 1200	In-state: $16,916 Out-of-state: $44,300	$12,928
Michigan Tech University	1508	3.86	ACT: 28 SAT: 1228	In-state: $19,608 Out-of-state: $44,504	$14,147
Northern Michigan University	1560	3.4	N/A	In-state: $14,702 Out-of-state: $20,198	$13,420
Oakland University	2268	3.5	ACT: 24 SAT: 1040	In-state: $16,575 Out-of-state: $23,188 No fees	$11,621
Saginaw Valley State University	1365	3.53	ACT: 22 SAT: 1047	In-state: $13,680 Out-of-state: $13,680 with automatic admitted out-of-state student scholarship	$12,500

University	*First-Year Class Size*	*First-Year Class Average GPA*	*First-Year Class Ave. Test Score*	*Tuition*	*Housing and Food*
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	7950	3.92	ACT: 32-35 SAT: 1400-1550	In-state: $18,346 Out-of-state: $63,962	$16,246
University of Michigan-Dearborn	1114	3.64	N/A	In-state: $15,840 Out-of-state: $33,768	N/A
University of Michigan-Flint	555	3.48	N/A	In-state: $14,890 Out-of-state: $28,426	$12,854
Wayne State University	3100	3.43	ACT: 26 SAT: 1169	In-state: $15,388 Out-of-state: $32,740	$12,098
Western Michigan University	2435	3.53	N/A	In-state: $15,816 Out-of-state: $19,736	$13,106

CHS COUNSELORS and alphabetical assignments

Seniors with last name beginning **A-G, please contact Mr. Tim Mann**
734 433 2201 ext. 1013 tmann@chelseaschools.org

Seniors with last name beginning **H-O, please contact Mrs. Daniela Bickel**
734 433 2201 ext. 1016 dbickel@chelseaschools.org

Seniors with last name beginning **P-Z, please contact Mrs. Dorvia Hill**
734 433 2201 ext. 1014 dthomas-hill@chelseaschools.org