

# NTHS College Planning Information

## Choosing a College

There is no *one* “right” college for any given student.  
3655 colleges and universities—not 1 right, 3654 wrong.



Funnel analogy:

Wide at top = all ideas accepted.  
Narrow at bottom = just a few will fall out.



Selection process is very personal: It begins with self-reflection on goals, strengths, weaknesses, reasons for going to college.

Pick a starting point, depending on the priorities of your preferences.



Once you’ve determined your criteria, find ones that “fit.”

Request additional information on your short list of colleges:

Get catalogs, explore their websites, read their financial aid brochures, plan a visit.



Campus Visit guidelines: discussion w/students & faculty, class observation, spend enough time to determine comfort level with surroundings (overnight visit?), interview.



Number of schools to which you should apply: safe (1-2), comfortable (3-5), reach (1-2); Consider application fees.



## College Selection Criteria



Type of School: Two-year or four-year. Consider these benefits of 2-year schools—quality has improved dramatically over the past decade, it's less academic pressure combined with more opportunities for students to succeed, they're easy to get into, it's a bargain, it's easy to transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year college.



Location: How far from home are you willing to be? Can you afford to fly to and from college? Will you be able to establish your own identity by attending college nearby? Are you really ready to be far away from your family?



Size: How large or small a school do you want? Do you prefer large lectures with hundreds of students or small classes with lots of student participation? Do you want to be on a big campus with many majors, an impressive library, and many campus organizations to choose from? Or would you prefer a small college where you know everyone's name?



Campus Setting: In a big city or a small town? Urban campuses are located in densely populated city areas, and may have greater access to cultural and business activities. Rural campuses, often near wilderness areas, usually have opportunities related to science and nature, not to mention outdoor activities. Suburban campuses are in small cities, large towns, or residential areas, and usually offer a taste of the city and country.



Cost: Public schools tend to be less expensive than private schools, and in-state schools less than out-of-state ones. Remember that the “sticker price” does not always provide the best means of comparing schools. Often the more expensive schools also offer more financial aid. Don't rule out any schools just because of cost.



Choice of Majors: Do you already know what major you want? It's okay if you're not sure yet.



Activities: What special interest groups, activities, sports, or fraternities/sororities do you want to be involved in?



Admissions Requirements: Acceptance rates, average GPA's and SAT/ACT score of most recent freshman class. Be realistic: What are your chances of being accepted?



Diversity: Number of students from minority backgrounds, number of out-of-state and/or international students.

# College Selection Worksheet

(Check all that apply):

Type: Two-year   
Four-year

Location: New England  Midwest   
Middle Atlantic  Southwest   
Southeast  West Coast

OR Distance from home no more than \_\_\_\_\_ miles

Size: Small (<3,000)   
Medium (3000-15,000)   
Large (>15,000)

Campus: Rural   
Suburban   
Urban

Cost: Inexpensive (<\$5000/yr.)   
Moderate (\$5000-\$10000/yr.)   
Expensive (>\$10,000/yr.)

Major: \_\_\_\_\_ or Undecided

Activities: \_\_\_\_\_  
or Unimportant

Admissions:  
Non-Competitive (GPA <2.0, SAT not Req.)   
Competitive (GPA 2.0-3.0, SAT 600-900)   
Selective (GPA 3.0-3.5, SAT 900-1200)   
Highly Selective (GPA 3.5+, 1200+)

Diversity: <25%  50-75%   
(% minority) 25-50%  75-100%

## 3 Most Important Criteria From Above:

1)

2)

3)



# College Planning Calendar

## SENIORS

### Summer

- Improve your reading and vocabulary skills.
- Continue searching for scholarships and ways to pay.
- Combine vacation plans with campus visits.
- Start working on your college application essays.
- Talk to people in interesting careers.
- Decide who you'll ask to write letters of recommendation.
- Talk with college friends home for summer.

### September

- Keep your calendar up-to-date tracking important dates and deadlines.
- Discuss your classes, college plans, and test scores with your high school counselor.
- Request college applications from the admissions office.
- Stay organized. Set up a filing system for copies of applications and correspondence.
- Arrange campus visits.
- Register to take the SAT/ACT, if necessary.
- Continue to search for free money (scholarships & grants) and other ways to pay.

### October

- Review your transcripts to verify that the information is correct.
- Send transcripts to your selected schools—ask your counselor if you need help.
- Find out the application-of-choice used by each college.

- Ask for letters of recommendation. Most admissions and scholarship applications require these letters.
- Get some pointers on writing admissions essays.
- View sample essays and essay questions.
- Attend college fairs and financial aid nights.
- Candidates for early school admission (early decision, early action, early admission, etc.) should complete college applications.

### November

- Continue completing your college applications. Early decision deadline is often November 1 or 15.
- Determine which financial aid forms the colleges on your list require—when in doubt contact the financial aid office.
- Search for additional sources of financial aid.
- Get a jump on things by estimating your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

### December

- Complete school applications ideally by December 1.
- Determine if you are eligible for financial aid.
- Collect information needed to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and review some FAFSA tips.
- Determine how to submit your FAFSA (paper or on the Web). Important: Don't submit your FAFSA before January 1—it will be returned not processed.
- Take SAT or ACT, if registered.
- Stay organized. Remember to keep copies of applications and correspondence.
- Continue to track important dates and deadlines on your calendar.

## January

- Submit your FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible. Some student aid programs award funds on a first-come, first-served basis. Waiting too long to submit your FAFSA could be costly.
- Fill out and submit required financial aid forms. Follow instructions carefully and make copies.
- When you have financial aid questions contact your FAO.
- Familiarize yourself with state financial aid deadlines. They tend to differ from federal and institutional deadlines.
- Let your parents know that the IRS could save them money through education tax deductions and credits.

## February–March

- College decision and financial award letters start rolling in.
- Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR). Carefully examine the results. A mistake could cause you to miss out on college funding.
- If there are special circumstances affecting your family's financial situation, be sure to discuss them with the FAO.
- Stay on top of important financial aid deadlines.
- Respond quickly to college requests for additional documentation.

## April

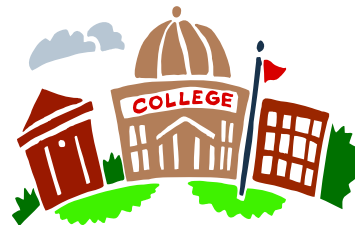
- Carefully analyze your letters.
- Make a decision and send your tuition deposit (most colleges ask for response by May 1).
- Notify the other colleges that you won't be attending.
- Register for Advanced Placement (AP) tests, if necessary.
- Carefully follow the directions in your acceptance letter. Along with important deadlines, these letters provide specific instructions on housing, financial aid, orientation, and more.
- Continue to mark your calendar with important deadlines.

## May

- Mail your final official transcripts.
- Respond quickly to requests and return necessary forms—when in doubt contact the financial aid office (FAO).
- Notify your FAO of any additional funding you'll be receiving to pay for college (scholarships and loans, etc.).
- Evaluate student loan lenders and take time to understand student loans.
- Learn about borrowing responsibly.

## Summer

- Attend orientation.
- Complete any college financial aid info received, if you have questions—ASK.
- Finalize your budget.
- Send thank you notes to individuals who help you get in.



## SAT/ACT Testing

Seniors who are planning to attend a four-year college or university after high school graduation take either the SAT or ACT in the fall of their senior year. Students who plan to attend a two-year college or a trade school are not required to take these tests. Please refer to the testing dates below:

### SAT ASSESSMENT 2008-09

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Reg Deadline</u>	<u>Late Reg Deadline</u>
Nov 1	Sept 26	Oct 10
Dec 6	Nov 5	Nov 18
Jan 24	Dec 26	Jan 6
Mar 14	Feb 10	Feb 24
May 2	Mar 31	Apr 9

### ACT ASSESSMENT 2008-09

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Reg Deadline</u>	<u>Late Reg Deadline</u>
Oct 25	Sept 22	Oct 3
Dec 13	Nov 7	Nov 20
Feb 7	Jan 6	Jan 16
April 4	Feb 27	Mar 13

The registration fee for the SAT is \$45. and the fee for late registration is an additional \$23. For the ACT, the registration fee is \$31. with an optional writing section for an additional \$15. The late registration fee for the ACT is \$20..

Registration packets are available in the Guidance Office or you may register online at: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) or [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

# SAT Preparation Resources

The NTHS Guidance Office cannot stress enough the importance of preparing for these college-entrance examinations. Utilizing one or more of the test prep activities listed below will typically result in higher scores and an increase in college acceptances:

- SAT On-Line: A free, web-based tutorial program that helps prepare students with lessons corresponding to the SAT's critical reading, writing, and math sections. Students can gain valuable experience by answering hundreds of practice questions and by taking the 3 full-length practice tests.  
(Most juniors have already registered for the SAT On-Line; you may contact the guidance office for access information).
- PSAT Results: Students who took the PSAT received a detailed "Score Report Plus." New Town's guidance counselors reviewed these score reports with the students and helped them to interpret the results. The report includes an "Improve Your Skills" section, which provides personalized critical reading, math, and writing skills feedback based on each student's pattern of responses across test questions. The skills listed are those that the student has the best chance of improving with some additional attention. Please contact the guidance office if you need a copy of your PSAT results.
- Other Test Preparation Resources:
  - ✓ Courses: Several colleges and companies offer prep courses for a fee, including CCBC, UMBC, Huntington, Sylvan, and Princeton Review.
  - ✓ Publications: Taking the SAT (available in the guidance office), 11 Practice Tests for the new SAT, The Real ACT Prep Guide, etc.
  - ✓ Websites: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), [www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com), [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

## College Search Web Sites

College Board	<a href="http://collegeboard.com">http://collegeboard.com</a>
Princeton Review	<a href="http://review.com">http://review.com</a>
Careers & College	<a href="http://careersandcolleges.com">http://careersandcolleges.com</a>
College View	<a href="http://collegeview.com">http://collegeview.com</a>

## Financial Aid Web Sites

U.S. Dept. of Ed. Information on Financial Aid	<a href="http://studentaid.ed.gov">http://studentaid.ed.gov</a>
FAFSA on the web	<a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">http://www.fafsa.ed.gov</a>
Web site to secure a PIN for the FAFSA	<a href="http://www.pin.ed.gov">http://www.pin.ed.gov</a>
Maryland Higher Education Commission (Information on state funded financial aid)	<a href="http://mhec.state.md.us">http://mhec.state.md.us</a>
College Board (Enter "Financial Aid" into "Search" box)	<a href="http://www.collegeboard.com">http://www.collegeboard.com</a>
Fast Web free scholarship search (probably the most used free site for scholarship search)	<a href="http://www.fastweb.com">http://www.fastweb.com</a>
Financial Aid information (general information and links to other sites for scholarship search)	<a href="http://www.finaid.org">http://www.finaid.org</a>
Scholarship Resource Network Express (good general information about financial aid and a free scholarship search)	<a href="http://srnexpress.com">http://srnexpress.com</a>
College Net (you are <u>not</u> required to give an e-mail address for this scholarship search)	<a href="http://collegenet.com/mach25">http://collegenet.com/mach25</a>
Scholarships.com (free financial aid information and scholarship search)	<a href="http://www.scholarships.com">http://www.scholarships.com</a>
Fast Aid (free scholarship search)	<a href="http://www.fastap.org">http://www.fastap.org</a>
Sallie Mae College Answer (walks students through the entire college search process including financial aid)	<a href="http://collegeanswer.com">http://collegeanswer.com</a>
Free For You (minority scholarship links)	<a href="http://www.free-4u.com/minority.htm">http://www.free-4u.com/minority.htm</a>
Minority Scholarship Guide	<a href="http://www.minority-scholarship-guide.com">http://www.minority-scholarship-guide.com</a>
Black Excel (African-American Scholarship Links)	<a href="http://www.black-excel.org/100minority.htm">http://www.black-excel.org/100minority.htm</a>

## Average GPA's & SAT's For Selected Colleges

		<u>GPA</u>	<u>SAT</u>
Alabama State University	Montgomery, AL	2.2	1155
Barton College	Wilson, NC	2.5	1425
Bennett College	Greensboro, NC	2.5	1170
Bethune-Cookman College	Daytona Beach, FL	2.8	1230
Bowie State University	Bowie, MD	3.0	1320
Capitol College	Laurel, MD	2.9	1395
Clark Atlanta University	Atlanta, GA	3.0	1365
College of Notre Dame	Baltimore, MD	3.3	1570
Columbia Union College	Takoma Park, MD	2.9	1305
Concord College	Athens, WV	2.3	1275
Coppin State College	Baltimore, MD	2.5	1275
Delaware State University	Dover, DE	2.6	1200
Florida A&M	Tallahassee, FL	3.2	1485
Frostburg State University	Frostburg, MD	3.0	1515
Hampton University	Hampton, VA	3.0	1560
Howard University	Washington DC	3.2	1620
Johns Hopkins University	Baltimore, MD	3.6	2055
Loyola College of MD	Baltimore, MD	3.4	1830
McDaniel College	Westminster, MD	3.4	1110
Michigan State University	East Lansing, MI	3.5	1710
Morehouse College	Atlanta, GA	3.1	1575
Morgan State University	Baltimore, MD	2.7	1500
Mt. Vernon College	Washington DC	3.1	1260
Norfolk State University	Norfolk, VA	2.6	1290
North Carolina Central U.	Durham, NC	2.5	1245
Penn State University	University Park, PA	3.5	1815
Salisbury University	Salisbury, MD	3.4	1680
Shaw University	Raleigh, NC	2.5	1155
Spelman College	Atlanta, GA	3.4	1620
Temple University	Philadelphia, PA	3.2	1620
Towson University	Baltimore, MD	3.4	1680
Tuskegee University	Tuskegee, AL	3.0	1320
University of Delaware	Wilmington, DE	3.5	1800
University MD (CP)	College Park, MD	3.3	1875
University MD (ES)	Princess Anne, MD	2.7	1260
University MD (BC)	Baltimore, MD	3.5	1725
University of Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh, PA	3.4	1770
University of Virginia	Charlottesville, VA	3.8	1950
Villa Julie College	Baltimore, MD	3.3	1575
Virginia Commonwealth U.	Richmond, VA	3.0	1560
Virginia State University	Petersburg, VA	2.6	1185
Virginia Union University	Richmond, VA	2.5	1260
West Virginia University	Morgantown, WV	3.1	1575