

ULTIMATE

COLLEGE PLANNING GUIDE





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WHY COLLEGE?

CAN YOU FIND WORK with a high school diploma? Most likely, yes. However, the type of work you can do may be limited, and the occupations a high school education qualifies you for may not provide long-term opportunities for growth and/or increased income.

Whether you are interested in business, science, the arts, technical training or specialized instruction, education after high school can be an important entry point for pursuing a career.

College helps you make the transition to making your own way in the world. The path is not without challenges, but these are part of a life lesson that incorporates academics, social skills and a growing sense of independence.

MONEY

AND NETWORKING

MONEY

Going to college qualifies you for higher-paying jobs in most fields. In general, college graduates make significantly more money than those with only a high school diploma.

Below are average yearly earnings by educational level*:

- No high school diploma: \$35,800
- High school graduate: \$44,300
- Associate degree: \$52,100
- Bachelor's degree: \$73,300
- Advanced degree holders: \$87,300 – \$121,600

Based on these numbers, over the course of a 40-year career, a high school diploma can net you \$1,772,000. That might not sound bad until you realize that a bachelor's degree can earn you \$2,932,000 over the same period.

NETWORKING

Never underestimate the power of meeting new people. Although estimates vary from study to study, job experts agree that networking is the primary way that job seekers learn about opportunities. These personal connections can include a friend, family member, neighbor, acquaintance, teacher or former coworker. Going to college exponentially expands your social circles. Every semester you encounter new classmates and professors who share similar interests (or who can introduce you to others) and can open doors to job opportunities.

These connections extend far beyond college graduation, providing years of future support to help you explore your options, achieve your goals and develop a successful career.

*"Trends in Higher Education Series: Education Pays 2023" College Board, February 2023
<https://research.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/education-pays-2023-presentation.pdf>

COLLEGE

MYTHS DEBUNKED

You can find oceans of information out there about college: on the Internet, from your high school counselor, in your mailbox, from your friends and family, on billboards, in your email, etc. Some of the information is good; some of it is simply not true. Here are some common college myths in circulation—and the reality behind them:

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MYTH: I'm better off going directly to a four-year college or university.

REALITY: There are definite advantages to starting at a community college:

- Save money: By attending a community college for your first two years, you can save up to \$74,920** on your bachelor's degree.
- Build your resumé: Instead of just getting a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution, starting at a community college can also provide you with certifications and/or an associate degree as you work toward your bachelor's degree. These additional credentials can help you stand out from other applicants when you start looking for a job.
- Explore your options: Because of the lower tuition rate, taking classes at a community college provides you with an affordable way to try a variety of different classes before you decide on your major.

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MYTH: I can't afford college.

REALITY: There are many resources for financial assistance, including scholarships, grants and loans. For example, 11,661 students were awarded \$34,553,138 in scholarships, grants and tuition waivers through Harper College in 2023-2024.

Continued page 4

**Source: College Board, Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2023.

MYTH: I did fine in high school, so I'm sure I'll do fine in college.

REALITY: College is more difficult than high school. That doesn't mean you can't do it, but you need to go into the experience with reasonable expectations of the increased workload.

Most colleges offer tutoring centers and other resources to help students make a successful transition. Many colleges—Harper included—offer special classes for new students to help you develop the skills you need to succeed in college.

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MYTH: I want to get good grades and raise my GPA, so I'm just going to take easy classes in high school.

REALITY: Getting good grades in easy classes does not help you prepare for college. The more you challenge yourself in high school by taking tougher college-prep classes, the better your chances of success in college.

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MYTH: College admissions aren't affected by classes or grades during my senior year of high school. Time to relax!

REALITY: The classes you take in your senior year can be very important in preparing you for college work. Every year, colleges retract offers of admission, put students on academic probation or alter financial aid packages as a result of "senioritis," or losing academic focus.

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MYTH: High school grades only count from sophomore year onwards.

REALITY: Your cumulative grade point average (CGPA) is made up of all your classes from freshman year through senior year. Let's put this in perspective. Say your GPA for freshman year of high school was 2.0, and you want to attend a college that requires a GPA of at least 2.85. To raise your freshman 2.0 GPA to a 2.85, you would need to score higher than a 3.0 for your sophomore, junior AND senior years in high school. You're better off starting off strong than spending your entire high school years trying to catch up.

MYTH: I can't wait to go to college so I can take whatever courses I want.

REALITY: While you get to choose and change your major, every student is required to complete a core set of classes known as general education requirements. These classes are an important component of your education because they help you become more broadly educated, which is important in our rapidly changing global community.

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MYTH: I don't know what major to choose. Maybe I should wait to start college until I know what I want to study.

REALITY: For most degrees, you don't have to choose a major until the end of your sophomore year. Until then, you can take courses in a variety of fields. You'll earn general education credits that count toward your degree, no matter what you major in. As you take different classes, you'll probably find a subject area you will enjoy studying.

On the other hand, you should know that some majors, especially career-oriented fields like engineering and design, require courses that have to be taken in order. Starting one of those majors after your freshman year can mean that it takes you longer to complete your degree. However, you can often begin taking classes in the field before you formally declare it as your major.

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MYTH: I'll apply for financial aid after I get accepted to college.

REALITY: High school students need to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) before a college sends out an acceptance letter. This also applies to applicants to a community college.

Typically, the FAFSA is available in October. Pay attention to colleges' priority financial aid deadlines, which may differ from state or federal deadlines.

The FAFSA application can be found online at fafsa.gov.

HOW DO I

PREPARE FOR COLLEGE?



FINDING

THE RIGHT FIT

Now is the time to begin searching for a college where you will want to spend at least the next two to four years of your life. You can find a variety of resources through your high school counselor and online.

As you search for your school you should keep the following factors in mind:

MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION FOR YOU

Everyone is different. Just because one of your friends is going to a particular university or “everyone” is going to a popular college doesn’t mean that school is the right place for you. Take the time to consider places that may not be the right choice for “everyone,” but might be the right choice for you.

VISIT COLLEGES

It’s a good idea to visit several college campuses. It’s an even better idea to visit very different ones (e.g., one small, liberal arts college; one large, four-year state school; one two-year community college, etc.). Doing so will help you figure out exactly



what you want from your college experience. Try to schedule your visit when school is in session and ask about the possibility of sitting in on a class. If applicable, look into an overnight stay in the residence halls with a host student for a real taste of what it would be like to live and study at that college.

Harper offers high school students and their parents the opportunity to meet with a recruitment specialist to discuss their educational path or take a tour. If you are interested in scheduling a college visit at Harper, please call 847.925.6700.

ASSESS HOW THE CURRICULUM FITS WITH YOUR POSSIBLE CAREER CHOICE

Some colleges are known for being particularly strong in certain areas of study. These may be in liberal arts such as English, communications and the arts, or they may be in more specialized areas such as science, law or medicine. Although it is possible that you may change your mind about your major after you have entered college, you should certainly look at institutions that offer programs in areas that interest you most.

CONSIDER THE OPTION OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A two-year community college such as Harper can be an excellent way to make the transition from high school to college. A two-year institution offers small class sizes, personalized attention and the option to live at home.

Many two-year colleges also offer career education in specific fields such as health care, electronics, manufacturing, engineering or law enforcement that give you the education you need to start working right after graduating with an associate degree or certificate.

REVIEW ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Many colleges, especially private institutions, have specific admission requirements. These include admission test scores, high school grade point averages, performance and math and evidence of involvement in school or community activities. Some schools may require applicants to have taken two years of the same world language in high school while others require a year of fine arts.

CONSIDER THE FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE

Most colleges and universities offer grants and scholarships.

You may want to enroll at the college offering you the most or biggest scholarships and grants. Remember to do the math, though: If a private university offers you a \$10,000 scholarship but tuition starts at \$25,000 per year, you will still need to pay \$15,000 per year. By comparison, in-state tuition and fees at a four-year Illinois public university costs, on average, \$15,360 per year before financial aid or scholarships are considered.* Tuition at a community college like Harper can cost approximately \$5,000 per year.

*College Board: Trends in College Pricing 2023
<https://research.collegeboard.org/trends/college-pricing>

KNOW THE APPLICATION DEADLINE

Many colleges and universities have specific application deadlines. If you miss the deadline, your application may not be considered. Applications can be submitted beginning in the fall of your senior year.

LIMIT YOUR CHOICES

Doing research is absolutely necessary to making the right decision. However, there are so many choices out there that you may feel overwhelmed. A good strategy is to narrow your choices down to five institutions. When you are down to five, focus on finding out more about each specific institution.

CONSIDER THE INTANGIBLES

Attending a college or university depends on many factors, including cost. Be sure to look at where the college is located. For example, would you be comfortable studying and/or living in an urban or rural area? Be sure that you also consider the student life opportunities, extracurricular activities and career planning support.



THE ABCs

OF THE SAT, ACT AND OTHER EXAMS

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Some colleges are “test optional” or “test free.” Confirm the testing requirements of each school you are considering.

SAT

The SAT consists of a Reading and Writing section and a Math section. An optional handwritten essay test is also available but must be selected at the time of registration.

The SAT total score scale ranges from 400 to 1600. Each college and university has its own criteria for how it evaluates the scores.

Students who wish to take the national SAT exam can register and pay through collegeboard.org.

ACT

The ACT consists of four multiple choice test sections: English, reading, math, and science. An optional, hand-written writing test is also available but must be selected at the time of registration.

The scores of the ACT range from 1 to 36. Each college and university has its own criteria for how it evaluates the scores. The ACT also provides information about where a student’s score ranks on the national scoring percentage.

Most educators recommend the ACT be taken in April or June of a high school student’s junior year.



PSAT

The PSAT is a way for high school students to practice for the SAT as well as part of qualifying for the National Merit Scholarship Program. It also allows you to gain access to college and career planning tools. D211 schools offer the test to students annually, usually in October.

COLLEGE LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM (CLEP)

CLEP tests are typically administered at many college campuses throughout the year, including Harper. (harpercollege.edu/testing/clep.php) Each institution has its own CLEP policy that determines acceptable passing scores and college credit that can be awarded for meeting those passing scores, so it’s important to be familiar with the desired institution’s CLEP policy before taking the test. Students can register and pay online through: clep.collegeboard.org

EARN TUITION

HARPER COLLEGE PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP: TUITION EARNED

Under the Harper College Promise Scholarship Program, every eligible incoming public high school student in Harper’s district (D211, D214 and D220) can earn up to two years of tuition at Harper College if they maintain solid grades, meet attendance requirements, don’t repeat classes, graduate on time and provide service to their community.

NOTE: Students must register for the Promise Program by December 15 of their freshman year.

For more information about the Harper Promise Scholarship, visit harpercollege.edu/promise or talk to your D211 school counselor.



THE POWER of 15

EXPERIENCING RIGOROUS COURSEWORK BEFORE COLLEGE

Students spend four years in high school planning and preparing for college. Research indicates that students who engage in college-level coursework while still in the supportive high school environment have an increased likelihood of being successful in college and graduating from college in four years. D211 students can enroll in rigorous, college-level coursework through both advanced placement and dual credit courses.

The Northwest Educational Council for Student Success (NECSS) partnership of D211, D214, D220, and Harper College offers high school students a variety of dual credit and advanced placement courses to encourage all students to earn the equivalent of 15 college credit hours — typically the equivalent of five college classes — prior to high school graduation. Both advanced placement and dual credit coursework offer the opportunity for high school students to earn college credit. The financial incentive for students and their families, combined with the confidence a student gains from engaging in rigorous coursework before entering college, makes for a winning combination.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

With AP® courses, students can experience the rigors of college-level studies while they still have the support of a high school environment. When students take AP courses, they demonstrate to college admission officers that they have pursued a challenging educational experience that will prepare them for success in college and beyond. Resourceful and dedicated AP teachers work with their students to develop and apply the skills, abilities and content knowledge they will need later in college. Each AP course is modeled upon a comparable college course, and college and university faculty play a vital role in ensuring that AP courses align with college-level standards.

Each AP course concludes with a college-level exam developed and scored by college and university faculty members as well as experienced AP teachers. AP exams are an essential part of the AP experience, enabling students to apply the new critical thinking skills they have learned. Most two- and four-year colleges and universities worldwide recognize AP courses in the admission process and accept successful exam scores for credit, advanced placement or both.

Performing well on an AP exam means more than just the successful completion of a course. Research consistently shows that students who score a 3 or higher typically earn higher GPAs in college and have higher graduation rates.

AP courses offered in D211 schools*

- AP Art History
- AP Biology
- AP Calculus AB
- AP Calculus BC
- AP Chemistry
- AP Chinese Language and Culture
- AP Computer Science A
- AP Computer Science Principles
- AP Environmental Science

- AP European History
- AP French Language and Culture
- AP German Language and Culture
- AP United States Government and Politics
- AP Human Geography
- AP English Language and Composition
- AP English Literature and Composition
- AP Macroeconomics
- AP Microeconomics
- AP Music Theory
- AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based
- AP Physics 2: Algebra-Based
- AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism
- AP Physics C: Mechanics
- AP Psychology
- AP Research
- AP Seminar
- AP Spanish Language and Culture
- AP Spanish Literature and Culture
- AP Statistics
- AP 2D Art and Design
- AP 3D Art and Design
- AP Drawing
- AP United States History
- AP World History: Modern

* Subject to change. Check with your specific school for the most up-to-date course offerings.

Learn more about College and University AP Credit Policies: apstudent.collegeboard.org/creditandplacement/search-credit-policies

WHAT IS DUAL CREDIT?

Dual credit courses allow students to simultaneously earn high school and college credit. Students are able to receive college credit by successfully completing the course in addition to passing the assessment developed and/or recognized by the college or university. Courses offered for dual credit stem from agreements between D211 and colleges such as Harper College, Triton College and the University of Illinois. Some dual credit courses are offered at D211 schools and are taught by D211 teachers; other dual credit courses are offered at Harper College and are taught by Harper's professors.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR DUAL CREDIT?

High school students who meet all applicable college course prerequisites are eligible for dual credit enrollment. Students in these dual credit college courses should have a high level of motivation and adequate time to devote to studying college-level coursework.

TRANSFERRING DUAL CREDIT COURSES

Credit earned from enrollment in dual credit courses is accepted by Illinois public colleges. Students who plan to attend a private or out-of-state school are encouraged to check with their D211 counselor, the college itself or use the Transferology website (transferology.com) to better determine whether a college will accept the dual credit.

HOW DO I REGISTER FOR DUAL CREDIT COURSES?

Harper College or Triton College

To receive college credit for completing a dual credit course, students will need to complete the required forms, including the High School Partnership Application. A high school counselor assigned to the dual credit process will assist students with the online form. There is no charge to register for the dual credit course.

University of Illinois

To receive college credit for completing the dual credit course, students will need to complete the application specific to the university. A high school counselor assigned to the dual credit process or the classroom teacher will assist all students with the dual credit application process. A per course fee ranging from \$400 to \$1,000 applies.

ADVANTAGES OF TAKING DUAL CREDIT COURSES

Students save time by taking classes while in high school that can be applied toward a college degree. Students also gain experience as a college student, so they learn early what to expect from college-level courses. Students fulfill high school graduation requirements and, at the same time, earn college credits toward a specialized certification, associate degree, or bachelor's degree. Most importantly, students save significant money on the total cost of their college education. Most courses are two to three credit hours.

COLLEGE MAJORS

& CAREER CLUSTERS

The current employment outlook for the United States indicates that most jobs will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school. Whether a student is preparing to attend a four-year university, a two-year college or enter the work force, the exploration of possible careers and college majors is vital. Though many students change their minds about their career or college major selections, it is valuable for students to explore multiple areas while still in high school to assist in decisions about where their skills and passions lie.

The development of career pathways around the 16 career clusters facilitates career and college major conversations. The 16 career clusters include:

- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Arts, Audio Visual Technology and Communication
- Business Management and Administration
- Education and Training
- Finance
- Government and Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Human Services
- Interactive and Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

Log in to your MaiaLearning account to explore these options in further detail. MaiaLearning is software available to students to explore college and career options specifically tailored to the students' interests and skills. MaiaLearning offers an Interest Profiler which gives students initial clusters to investigate. Students are encouraged to take the assessment multiple times throughout their high school careers as their interests may change over time.

Career pathways within the 16 clusters represent a specific series of courses to be taken during high school. Students are encouraged to explore different clusters and career pathways continually seeking connections to areas of passion and skill.



HOW DO I

APPLY FOR COLLEGE?



UNPACKING

THE APPLICATION PACKAGE

Since colleges all have their own criteria for accepting students, you need to stay organized to make sure you are supplying the necessary information to each college. Colleges and universities may require any combination of the following pieces in your application package:

APPLICATION

This form is your basic tool for entering college. It asks for a variety of information about you and your high school career. Colleges have either their own online application or use the Common App.

APPLICATION FEE

Application fees average \$50 each, which can sometimes be waived with a promotion code or if your family income meets the school's guidelines for a waiver. Other colleges do not charge any fee at all. Check with the college's admission office for information about fees and fee waivers.

HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT

Colleges want to see an official record of your high school grades. Some require the official transcript during the admission process, while others allow students to self-report their academic record. All colleges will require a final transcript after graduation. Use MaiaLearning to request your transcripts.

If you are applying to college through the Common App, your high school counselor uploads your transcript directly into the Common App. Otherwise, your high school will send the transcripts directly to the colleges to which you are applying.

ADMISSION TEST REQUIREMENTS (ACT/SAT SCORE)

Many colleges and universities require you to submit ACT or SAT scores. You can select four institutions to receive your scores for free when registering for the ACT or the SAT.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Colleges often ask students to provide letters of recommendation as part of the application process. Students should follow the instructions on the application to determine how many letters of recommendation are required and who should author them.

APPLICATION ESSAY

Many schools require applicants to write an essay as part of their application package. The essay is an opportunity to express your individuality and explain why you want to attend the specific school.

ENTRANCE INTERVIEW

Some colleges require an interview as part of the application process. Even if the interview is not required by the school itself, you may want to request an interview in order to get a better idea of what it would be like to attend that school.

AUDITION/PORTFOLIO

If you are applying for a program in the performing or fine arts such as theatre, music, dance or art, you may need to supply a portfolio of your work or perform an audition. The portfolio is a collection of your art and can be submitted in a variety of forms including electronic submission.

WOW THEM

WITH LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Most colleges today require letters of recommendation. Letters can be from a teacher, administrator, counselor or other adult who knows you well.

KEEP THESE POINTS IN MIND

- Give your letter writers plenty of time to prepare their letters—at least one month. Request teacher letters of recommendation through MaiaLearning.
- Download and complete the D211 Brag Sheet through MaiaLearning. Once completed, you can upload your Brag Sheet for viewing by your counselor and teacher recommenders.
- If a college or university does not request a specific instructor to write a letter, consider using an English, math or science teacher to write your letter. If you plan on studying music, theatre or art you're better off asking a teacher who is familiar with your accomplishments or skill in those areas.
- Use a current reference. Do not ask for a letter from someone who taught you during your freshman year.
- Consider using a teacher who knows your involvement in extracurricular activities outside the classroom.
- Communicate with the letter writer. Let the teacher or counselor know about any specific activities in high school that were special to you.
- On your application form, waive your right to review the letters of recommendation. The college or university views the letters as more credible if you haven't reviewed them.
- Follow up with thank-you notes to everyone who has written you a letter of recommendation.

ESSAY

TIPS

Many colleges and universities require you to submit an essay with your application. The topic of this essay is usually the reason(s) you want to attend that particular college. Some colleges give two choices and ask what you hope to accomplish in your life as the additional topic.

MaiaLearning allows you to discover the essay prompts of colleges that interest you. In addition, you can develop an essay outline using the tool in MaiaLearning.

Experts advise students to follow the tips below to create a good essay for a college application.

MAKE YOURSELF SHINE

This is an opportunity to show the application committee what makes you special and interesting.

Schools are interested in seeing your unique perspective, strong writing skills, and authentic voice.

KEEP THE TOPIC SPECIFIC

Many colleges ask you to describe yourself, an experience that influenced your life or a special interest and its significance. Often, the essay involves describing an extracurricular activity you have enjoyed. Before you write the essay, come up with a list of several essay topics and the key points involved in each one. Then choose the topic about which you feel most strongly.

OUTLINE YOUR ESSAY

List all the items that apply to your essay and then organize them. Start with a statement of purpose, then address the individual items and conclude with a restatement of your essay.

PAY ATTENTION TO THE OPENING PARAGRAPH

Your opening paragraph plays a large role in the success of your essay. There are several approaches

Continued page 16

you might use including starting with a quotation, a rhetorical question or an anecdote you plan to expand upon in the essay.

REVIEW AND REWRITE

Do not settle for your first effort. Rewrite the essay. Then edit the final draft one more time and be diligent in your proofreading for spelling or grammar errors. When you think it's perfect, have a teacher review it and give you feedback.

IMPRESS

AT THE INTERVIEW

If you are required to take part in a college interview, keep these pointers in mind:

- Check the college's policy on interviews by calling them or visiting their website.
- Prepare to be asked about your favorite subjects, future plans, why you want to attend the college, extracurricular activities, people you admire and your strengths and weaknesses.
- Use the interview as two-way communication to find out more about the college. Consider asking what orientation activities can help you transition to college and internships in your areas of interest on campus.
- Ask other questions, such as the rate of student retention (i.e., how many students continue from one year to the next and on to completion of their program of study), transfer rates, reasons for transfer and more.
- Ask to meet current students to get their perspectives. Be sure you get contact information or connect via social media to follow up later with any other questions you might have.
- Choose appropriate clothing for your interview, even if you meet virtually with a college rep.
- Send a thank-you note to your interviewer within 24 to 48 hours of your meeting.
- Additional questions can be found on page 20.

IMPROVE

YOUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS

- Spelling errors are unacceptable.
- Submit several applications and keep your options open. You may not be accepted by your first-choice school and may need to choose the next best option.
- Your grades, extracurricular activities and letters of recommendation play an important role in gaining entrance to the college or university of your choice.
- Colleges rely on email to share information and announce admissions decisions, so check your email frequently. Use a non-school email account, and avoid any potentially embarrassing email handles.

THE COMMON APPLICATION

Apply to multiple colleges and universities at the same time by using the Common App, which is accepted by more than 1,000 schools. The newest edition of the Common App is available annually on August 1, but you can create an account at any time.

Routine details such as name and address as well as education information, high school activities and household information only need to be filled in once. However, each school still has its own deadlines, test score ranges, and application requirements. Take note of each college's application requirements and follow them closely.

Visit commonapp.org for the application and resources to guide you through the process.

COLLEGE AND CAREER

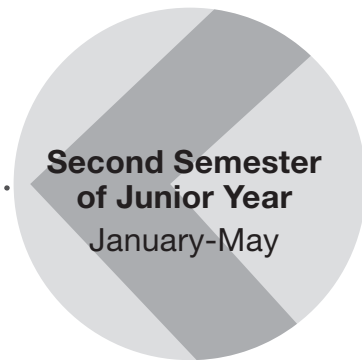
PLANNING CALENDAR

JUNIOR YEAR

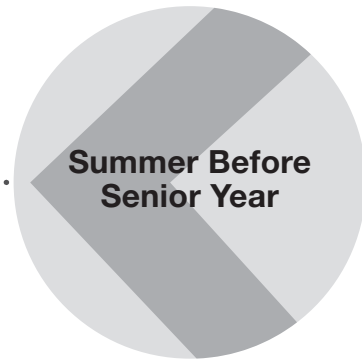
- Begin career and college research in your high school's college/career center.
- During first semester, begin meeting with college admission representatives when they visit your school.
- Explore college and career options using MaiaLearning.
 - » Log in with Google using your D211 login credentials.
- Meet with appropriate college, military or career representatives visiting high schools.
- Attend career exploration experiences including career treks, career fairs, and guest speaker panels.
- Attend First Generation College Night in fall.
- Sign up for PSAT/NMSQT test (given at all D211 schools) in October.



- Attend a College Planning Night for juniors and parents (dates to be announced by home high school).
- Register and take the ACT and/or SAT during junior year.
- Review career/college requirements and carefully choose courses for senior year.
- Visit college campuses. Ask to meet with professors and/or students and see facilities for intended major.
- Talk to your counselor or the college counselor in your school to develop a list of good college matches.
- Retake ACT or SAT, if necessary.
- Attend D211 College Night at Palatine High School in spring.

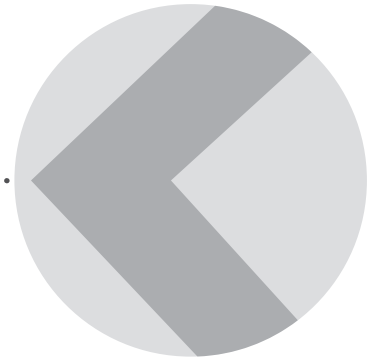


- Continue campus visits and college interviews; narrow your list of prospective colleges.
- Attend college programs for high school students.
- Work or intern at a summer job that relates to your major/career goals.
- Work on your personal statement, Common App essays, and other essays required by the colleges where you plan to apply.

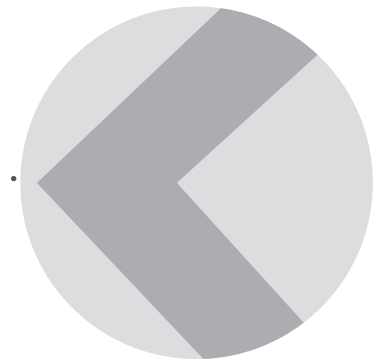


SENIOR YEAR

- Meet individually with your school counselor/college counselor to discuss post-secondary plans.
- Register to retake ACT and/or SAT as necessary.
- Meet with appropriate college, military, and career representatives.
- Attend Financial Aid Seminar for parents (date to be announced by home high school).
- Attend First Generation College Night in fall.
- Complete (with parents) the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) when it becomes available in October to apply for federal/state/college financial aid.
- Finalize college choices and apply online.
- In fall, register for Advanced Placement tests.
- Visit colleges.
- Complete all college applications before winter break.
- Check individual colleges for:
 - » Application deadlines, some of which are as early as October 15
 - » Special “early decision, early action” requirements
 - » Letter of recommendation requirements
 - » Specific majors with limited enrollment deadlines (i.e., engineering, aviation, architecture)
 - » Specific scholarship deadlines
- Remember to request transcripts through your home high school via MaiaLearning.



- Investigate scholarship opportunities through the MaiaLearning in your school and complete applications. (These are also posted on your school website.)
- Request that mid-year transcripts be sent to colleges that require them.
- Revisit your college of choice during spring break.
- Notify all colleges to whom you have applied of your decision by May 1.
- Take Advanced Placement tests in May.
- Submit your housing deposit to your school of choice (if applicable).
- Attend D211 College Night in spring.



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Information in this publication is subject to change.

QUESTIONS

TO ASK A COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE

1. What are your admissions standards and what kind of student are you looking for?
2. What are the admissions deadlines I need to know?
3. What are the tuition, room and board, and comprehensive costs of this school?
4. What kinds of financial aid are available, including merit-based aid? Is there a separate scholarship application?
5. How large is the student population? What is the male to female ratio?
6. What is the makeup of the student body (i.e., from what states, commuter vs. residential, religious backgrounds, most popular majors)?
7. What is the campus like (i.e., size, location and distance to the nearest city or downtown area)?
8. What is the housing situation? Where can freshmen live? What are the dorms like?
9. What percentage of students return for their sophomore year? What percentage graduate?
10. Do you have my major? What are the strongest majors?
11. What is the average class size for freshmen? For upperclassmen? Are classes typically taught by professors or graduate students?
12. Are there opportunities for research, independent study, internships or study abroad?
13. Are there fraternities and sororities on campus? If so, what percentage of the student body is involved?
14. Do you have an honors program?
15. Describe the job placement program both during school and after graduation. How about placement in medical or law school—is there help?
16. Do you have career planning and counseling services?
17. What arrangements must I make to visit your campus?
18. What is special about this school, and why should I attend this one over a similar school?





Harper College
TOP 20
in the NATION



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Minority Serving
Institution



Asian American
Native American and Pacific
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