



MINNETONKA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# POST HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING GUIDE 2019-20



“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”

# Introduction

This booklet has been designed by the Minnetonka Counseling Department to assist Minnetonka High School juniors and seniors and their parents in the post high school planning process. There are numerous options to choose from, and **knowing yourself well is the key to making appropriate choices**. Throughout this guide, you will find answers to many of your questions regarding post high school planning, as well as tools to help you gain further insight into what path after high school is best for you. Also, keep in mind the counseling seminars you have completed in the past, which provided you with ideas for future careers, educational paths and information regarding your abilities and interests. Consider what you have learned about yourself in your classes, high school activities, jobs, etc. From experiences like these, you have gained knowledge regarding your strengths and weaknesses, as well as your likes and dislikes. All of this valuable data about yourself will help you make appropriate choices for your future.

Now is definitely the time to begin studying the options available to you and putting a plan in place that will allow you to attain your goals. **Your counselor is prepared to help you in this process**. Although your counselor cannot make any decisions for you, he or she can help you find more information, answer your questions, and assist

you in sorting through your options. In addition, spend some time in the College and Career Center researching careers and schools. Our college counselor, career center coordinator and trained parent volunteers are eager to help you find what you need. The planning process can seem overwhelming; however, people are available to assist you along the way—please utilize them!

**What becomes of your future is up to you!** For most young people, this is the first opportunity you have had to make significant decisions that can have great impact on the rest of your life. Take advantage of the information in this booklet, visit the College and Career Center, meet with your counselor, and get excited about the next great adventure in your life. We wish you a fulfilling and prosperous life beyond MHS!

## MHS Counselors

Phone 952-401-5811

Fax 952-401-5814

Minnetonka High School

18301 Highway 7

Minnetonka, Minnesota 55345

**High School Code # 240-780**

## MHS Counselors

Brad Burnham  
952-401-5816 | brad.burnham@minnetonkaschools.org  
Last names A-Bur

Jennifer Stout  
952-401-5818 | jennifer.stout@minnetonkaschools.org  
Last names Bus-Em

Theresa Exenberger  
952-401-5824 | theresa.exenberger@minnetonkaschools.org  
Last names En-Han

Conor Maher  
952-401-5819 | conor.maher@minnetonkaschools.org  
Last names Hao-Ka

Stephanie McClendon  
952-401-5821 | stephanie.mcclendon@minnetonkaschools.org  
Last names Kb-Mag

Christina Taylor  
952-401-5813 | christina.taylor@minnetonkaschools.org  
Last names Mah-Ol

Amanda Wavrin  
952-401-5817 | amanda.wavrin@minnetonkaschools.org  
Last names Om-Sam

Kendra Olson  
952-401-5823 | kendra.olson@minnetonkaschools.org  
Last names San-Tam

David Bierly  
952-401-5820 | david.bierly@minnetonkaschools.org  
Last names Tan-Z

Phil Trout  
952-401-5746 | collegeguy@minnetonkaschools.org  
College Counselor

Laura Herbst  
952-401-5897 | laura.herbst@minnetonkaschools.org  
Advanced Learning Coordinator and IB Diploma Candidate Advisor

# Contents

## Post High School Options ..... 4-5

*Four-Year Colleges*  
*Two-Year Colleges*  
*Technical Colleges and Specialty Schools*  
*The Military*  
*Employment*  
*Apprenticeship*

## Self-Reflection ..... 6-7

## Timeline ..... 8-9

*Freshman Year*  
*Sophomore Year*  
*Junior Year*  
*Senior Year*

## Researching Schools ..... 10-12

*Preparation Requirements*  
*Admission Criteria*  
*Admission Test Requirements*  
*NCAA Eligibility Requirements*  
*Considering Personal Preferences*  
*Resources Available*  
*The College Visit*  
*Putting It Together*

## The Application Process ..... 13-14

*Applications*  
*Transcript Release*  
*Recommendations*  
*The Essay*  
*The Interview*

## Financing Your Education ..... 15-18

*Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*  
*CSS Profile*  
*Scholarships*  
*Scholarship Scams*  
*Tuition Reciprocity*

## Glossary ..... 19

*“Greatness is not  
in where we stand,  
but in what direction  
we are moving.  
We must sail  
sometimes with the  
wind and sometimes  
against it—  
but sail we must,  
and not drift,  
nor lie at anchor.”*

— **Oliver Wendell Holmes**

Cover quote:  
**Abraham Lincoln**

# Post High School Options

*“Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives — choice, not chance, determines your destiny.”*

— Aristotle

There are many options for students after high school. The possibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A four-year college (either public or private)
- A two-year college (either public or private)
- A technical college (either public or private)
- A specialty school
- The military (regular enlistment, ROTC, or a service academy)
- Employment
- An apprenticeship
- A post-graduate program (a “gap” year)

**Four-year colleges** are located in every state and are either public (which means they are partly supported by taxes and are therefore generally less expensive than private colleges) or private (which are not supported by taxes). Both public and private colleges offer a wide variety of programs and vary in size from very small to very large. There are more than 3,000 four-year colleges in the United States to choose from. Examples of four-year colleges in Minnesota are:

- The University of Minnesota (campuses in the Twin Cities, Crookston, Duluth, Morris and Rochester)
- State University System (campuses in Mankato, St. Cloud, Bemidji, Winona, Marshall, Moorhead and St. Paul)
- Private Colleges (Augsburg, Bethel, Carleton, Concordia-Moorhead, Concordia-St. Paul, Gustavus, Hamline, Macalester, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, St. Benedict, St. Catherine, St. John’s, St. Mary’s, St. Olaf, St. Scholastica and St. Thomas, among others)

**Two-year colleges** can also be either private or public and are located throughout the United States. The most common two-year college is the public community college, which is usually the least expensive and most convenient option for students wanting to pursue a college education. Students who desire to earn a four-year degree can complete their last two years by transferring their community college credits to a four-year school that agrees to accept them. Examples of community colleges near Minnetonka are:

- Normandale Community College, Bloomington
- North Hennepin Community College, Brooklyn Park
- Minneapolis Community and Technical College

## Post High School Options (continued)

**Technical colleges and specialty schools** are somewhat different from two- and four-year colleges in that they offer training for a specific occupation and usually do not offer general coursework such as English, social studies, the humanities, etc. (This can vary somewhat by school.) Lengths of programs vary but most can be completed in one or two years. The student is then ready to enter the job market. Technical colleges or specialty schools can be either public or private. Examples of technical colleges and specialty schools in Minnesota are:

- Hennepin Technical College in Eden Prairie (public)
- Hennepin Technical College in Brooklyn Park (public)
- Dunwoody College of Technology in Minneapolis (private)
- Aveda Institute in Minneapolis (private)

**The military** offers a variety of training opportunities and requires a service commitment in return. In addition to regular enlistment, students who want to pursue a college degree before they complete their service commitment can apply for a ROTC program or a service academy. ROTC scholarships allow students to complete their education at a civilian college at the same time they are training to become a commissioned officer in a branch of the armed services. Many college campuses offer ROTC programs. Names and phone numbers of military contacts can be obtained in the MHS College and Career Center.

The service academies, which require a fairly extensive application process, include the following:

- **United States Air Force Academy**  
[www.usafa.af.mil](http://www.usafa.af.mil)  
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80840  
Ph. 800-443-9266
- **United States Coast Guard Academy**  
[www.cga.edu](http://www.cga.edu)  
New London, Connecticut 06320  
Ph. 800-883-8724
- **United States Merchant Marine Academy**  
[www.usmma.edu](http://www.usmma.edu)  
Kings Point, NY 11024  
Ph. 866-546-4778

- **United States Military Academy**  
[www.usma.edu](http://www.usma.edu)  
West Point, N.Y. 10996  
Ph. 845-938-4041
- **United States Naval Academy**  
[www.usna.edu](http://www.usna.edu)  
Annapolis, Maryland 21402  
Ph. 410-293-4361

**Employment** immediately after high school is an option chosen by students who know that they wish to be involved in an occupation which requires no additional training beyond high school or who want to delay formalized post high school training. Sometimes companies have their own training programs. Students wishing to pursue the employment option should talk with their counselor about resources.

The following Web sites provide information on career planning and researching jobs:

[www.bls.gov/oooh](http://www.bls.gov/oooh)  
[www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)  
[www.iseek.org](http://www.iseek.org)

**Apprenticeship** programs are another way to get training for a particular occupation. Programs are available in more than 200 skilled trades in Minnesota. Information can be obtained from:

Apprenticeship Programs  
Department of Labor and Industry  
443 Lafayette Road N.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
Phone: 651-284-5090  
- and -  
[www.dli.mn.gov/workers/be-apprentice](http://www.dli.mn.gov/workers/be-apprentice)

*The post high school options are many.  
Which one is right for you?  
Perhaps the most important step in the  
post high school planning process is that  
of self-reflection. Read on to learn how  
to get started in this process.*

# Self-Reflection

**Who are you?** Finding the right plan for you requires an understanding of your values, skills and interests. One factor you should consider is how your learning style matches the educational institutions that you are considering attending. If you prefer courses that relate directly to a particular career, and/or a more hands-on approach to education, you may want to consider beginning your education at a community college or technical school. Or, you might decide that you want to begin college coursework, however you do not want to move away from home or attend a four-year institution quite yet. Community colleges can help ease the transition from high school to college. Of course, the decision of whether to attend a two-year college or a four-year college is not this simple. We want to remind you of the importance of considering *who you are* when you are deciding on what type of institution to attend.

The following questions may help you consider your readiness for attending a four-year college.



## Ask Yourself!\*

1. Are your academic record and/or your college admissions test scores better than average?
2. Do you have effective study skills?
3. Do you enjoy doing academic work?
4. Do you read well?
5. Do you write well?
6. Why are you pursuing college?
  - a) Your chosen career requires college training.
  - b) You like school and want to further your education.
  - c) Attending college is an important family value or tradition.
  - d) You're not sure what the alternative is.
  - e) All of your friends are.
7. How have you prepared for college academic work?
  - a) Studying and working in high school.
  - b) Taking the most academically challenging coursework available.
  - c) Making reading a daily habit.
  - d) Pursuing opportunities outside school such as mentorships, camps, and other academic opportunities.
8. How do you know that you are ready to live independently?
  - a) You manage your own bank accounts.
  - b) You do your homework without parental supervision.
  - c) You have independent living skills (i.e., laundry, waking with an alarm clock, etc.)
  - d) You have spent time away from home before.

\* (Adapted from *A Step-by-Step Guide to Life after VAHS*)

## Self-Reflection (continued)

Once you decide what type of institution you would like to attend, you must consider what school criteria are most important to you. This will allow you to narrow your list of schools to those that match your needs best. You may be living on campus for four years, so don't forget the importance of comparing campus life, diversity of the student body, living arrangements, etc. The following factors may be helpful to consider:

- Size of the school
- Location of the school
- Availability of your major
- Size of the classes
- Quality of the faculty
- Flexibility and availability of interdepartmental study or transfer
- Availability of courses through registration
- Availability of faculty and facilities to undergraduate students
- Success of graduates pursuing graduate studies and/or employment opportunities
- Instructional facilities and equipment
- Academic structure and core requirements
- Type of sports programs available
- Advising programs
- Programs to meet special needs
- Cost of the institution
- Composition and interrelationships of the student body
- Availability of extracurricular activities
- Selectivity and admissions requirements
- Living arrangements and facilities
- Availability of financial aid & scholarships
- Kind of school (i.e., public, private, church-affiliated, liberal, conservative, etc.)
- Campus/community safety and security
- Relationship of the school and the community
- Climate and geographical considerations
- Aesthetic components of the school
- Prestige and name recognition
- School calendar

**Once you complete your self-reflection,  
we recommend the college search feature  
on Naviance Student.**

**<https://student.naviance.com/minnetonka>**



# Timeline

## Freshman Year

- Meet with your counselor to review your four-year plan.
- Get involved in high school activities.
- Pay attention to your grades—it helps to have a solid first year in high school.

## Sophomore Year

- Review your four-year plan, making adjustments to coincide with your post-high school plans.
- Find a community service activity that suits you.
- Open your account in Naviance Student. Complete the Career Interest Profiler to begin exploring career and educational options.
- Know what is on your transcript.
- Explore summer opportunities to enrich your experiences.

## Junior Year

- Attend the National College Fair in the fall with the rest of the Junior class.
- Take the PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test in October. This is strongly encouraged for all college bound juniors and necessary for anyone wishing National Merit recognition.
- Start your post-high school planning in earnest. A good first step is to **meet with your counselor** and review your strengths and interests, your academic plan, and your current record. Attend one of the college admission presentations given by our college counselor.
- Sign on to Naviance Student and complete My Game Plan and any other assignments from the Junior Seminar.
- Research colleges using the College and Career Center, talking with college representatives, and asking colleges to send you information.
- **Discuss college costs with your family** and begin to research financial aid and scholarship opportunities.
- Register carefully for your senior year courses, making sure that you will have the necessary preparation requirements for college.
- In the spring, take the ACT and/or the SAT and possibly SAT Subject Tests. If you are considering ROTC or a service academy, contact the appropriate persons so that you are doing the preliminary parts of the application.
- Build a list of colleges that meet your criteria and your interest. Note their application deadlines and testing requirements.
- Submit the NCAA Eligibility Center form if you plan to participate in a Division I or II sport in college.
- Visit colleges you're interested in.





## Timeline (continued)

### Senior Year

#### Fall

- **Make an appointment to see your counselor.** Review your credits, college entrance requirements, and college choices. Talk about the application process and, if needed, the counselor recommendation.
- If needed, see teachers about recommendations.
- Attend a college admissions presentation given by our college counselor.
- Meet with college admission representatives during their visit to MHS. See schedule of visits on Naviance Student.
- Attend the National College Fair in the evening and with your parents, if possible. Firm up your alternatives.
- If needed, complete the Senior Questionnaire on Naviance Student.
- Re-take the ACT or SAT if necessary. Have test scores sent to the colleges to which you are applying.
- Check out scholarship opportunities on Naviance Student.
- In October, attend the financial aid program at MHS.
- After October 1, fill out the FAFSA if you plan to apply for need-based financial aid.
- Complete the CSS Profile (financial aid) form if your college choices require it.
- **Check application deadlines** and meet those deadlines. Remember that most college applications are submitted prior to winter break, and that counselors need requests for recommendations at least three weeks before the application deadline. The University of Minnesota early action deadline is November 1. Many other colleges have early deadlines as well.
- Complete applications and essays.

- **Fill out an MHS Transcript Release Form** (forms are also available for download from Naviance Student). Allow enough time for processing (at least one week). Requests are date-stamped and handled on a first come, first served basis.
- See your counselor, or our college counselor, with any questions you may have about the application process.

#### January–February

- Submit any additional applications.
- Request mid-year grade reports be sent to colleges that require them.
- Stay focused on your academic work while you wait for acceptance letters.

#### March–June

- Make final campus visits if needed.
- Send in confirmation and the housing deposit.
- Notify colleges of your decision to attend or not attend. Note: The national candidate reply date is May 1.
- Notify your counselor of your plans.
- Request that your final transcript and verification of graduation be sent to the college you plan to attend.

# Researching Schools

Researching schools thoroughly can be the difference between a satisfying post high school experience and one that is not quite so satisfying. There are many aspects to the research process.

## Preparation Requirements

Knowing what **preparation** is needed in high school is important. Most four-year colleges have specific coursework they want students to have completed before entering their college. These **preparation requirements** can vary from college to college. The minimum preparation requirements for a majority of four-year colleges are: four years of English; three or more years of social studies; three years of laboratory science; three years of math (starting with algebra); two years of a world language; and one year of the arts. However, students wishing to apply to a very competitive college (or a specialized program, such as engineering) will most likely need to take more math, science, and/or world language. **It is always best to check directly with the colleges to which you are applying for information about admissions criteria.**

## Admission Criteria

In addition to the coursework requirements, colleges have **admission criteria** that vary from college to college. Admission criteria most commonly refer to minimum grade point average and/or standardized test scores needed for admission. These items are looked at carefully by college admission staff. Many colleges also consider the rigor of coursework taken in high school. It is certainly educationally sound to be taking coursework that is appropriately challenging for you. Colleges require that you have a copy of your high school record (your transcript) sent to them so that they can see what kind of academic work you did in high school. Most commonly, admissions offices of public colleges rely heavily on the transcript and test scores for making admission decisions. Most private colleges will give the transcript and test scores primary consideration, but will also look at special talents as well. Colleges may want to know what activities you were involved with while in high school, how your teachers

viewed you (via the teacher recommendation), and what you are like as a person (via the personal essay and sometimes an interview). **Keep in mind that the academic record is of primary importance.** Service academies have their own special criteria. It is always best to check directly with the colleges to which you are applying for information about admission criteria.

## Admissions Test Requirements

Taking a college admissions test is a good idea for students considering attending a four-year college. Most four-year colleges require that you take either the ACT or the SAT and have those test scores sent directly to the college from the testing agency. It is generally recommended that the ACT or SAT be taken no later than spring of the junior year. (It is possible to take either test in the fall of the senior year.) These tests can be taken more than once. Students with a disability may qualify for accommodations for the ACT/SAT college entrance exams. For details, visit the following websites. You can register for the ACT at **[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)** and for the SAT at **[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)**.

Minnetonka is a test site for the ACT and the SAT, and several neighboring high schools are also test sites. These tests are given on designated Saturday mornings. It is common practice for colleges to consider your highest score when reviewing an application for admission. Students who register for the ACT test may choose either of two options—the ACT Assessment or the ACT Assessment Plus Writing, which includes a 30-minute Writing Test. A few colleges (usually very competitive private colleges) require that students take at least two SAT subject tests, in addition to the SAT or ACT. The schedule for this year's ACT and SAT national test dates are listed on the following page.

## Researching Schools (continued)

### ACT

<u>ACT Test Dates</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>
September 14, 2019	August 16, 2019
October 26, 2019	September 20, 2019
December 14, 2019	November 8, 2019
February 8, 2020	January 10, 2020
April 4, 2020	February 28, 2020
June 13, 2020	May 8, 2020
July 18, 2020	June 19, 2020

### SAT

<u>SAT Test Dates</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>
August 24, 2019	July 26, 2019
October 5, 2019	September 6, 2019
November 2, 2019	October 3, 2019
December 7, 2019	November 8, 2019
March 14, 2020*	February 14, 2020
May 2, 2020	April 3, 2020
June 6, 2020	May 8, 2020

\*SAT Only (no subject tests)

## NCAA Eligibility Requirements

Students who intend to play a varsity sport in college at the Division I or Division II level must meet the **NCAA's eligibility requirements** and abide by their recruiting guidelines. Eligibility requirements include successful completion of a core curriculum of at least 16 specified academic courses (called "core courses") and meeting admission test score requirements. Specific information on NCAA eligibility requirements, as well as the NCAA form to request that a transcript be sent to NCAA at the end of the junior year, can be obtained at <http://eligibilitycenter.org>. Students may register for eligibility on-line with the NCAA Eligibility Center. See your counselor if you have questions.

## Considering Personal Preferences

When researching and comparing colleges, you will want to **consider your preferences** such as selectivity, type of school (public or private), majors offered, size, location, activities available, faculty to student ratio, composition

of the student body, facilities, special programs available, and cost. It is a good idea to have in mind what is most important to you before you begin exploring schools. Many students benefit from using a comparison worksheet like the one included in this booklet. (See back cover.)

## Resources Available

There are many **resources** available to you as you research colleges. In addition to your **parents** and your **school counselor**, a primary resource is the Minnetonka High School **College and Career Center**. The center is located adjacent to the Counseling Office. A staff of parent volunteers, the College and Career Center Coordinator and the College Counselor are available to assist you. In the College and Career Center you will find major college resource guides, computer programs and other resources about colleges and universities. Many **college representatives** visit the MHS College and Career Center every year. To find out when they are available, check the Naviance Student website or stop in the College and Career Center for a schedule of visits. Another good way to access information about colleges is through the National College Fair, which is held in Minneapolis every fall. Representatives from colleges across the country are available in one place to visit with students (and parents) and provide information. MHS facilitates an annual "field trip" for all juniors to the college fair. Check with the College and Career Center for details. Every spring there is also a regional college fair, which highlights primarily Midwestern colleges.

Numerous Web resources are available for researching colleges. A handout, including Web sites for students and parents, is available in the Counseling Office. Here are examples of some college search sites and guides:

[student.naviance.com/minnetonka](http://student.naviance.com/minnetonka)

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

[www.collegedata.com](http://www.collegedata.com)

[www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

[www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)

[collegecost.ed.gov](http://collegecost.ed.gov)

<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>

## Researching Schools (continued)

*“If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters.*

*Excellence is not an exception; it is a prevailing attitude.”*

— General Colin Powell

### The College Visit

An excellent way to research a college is to **visit the campus**. You should contact the admissions office of the colleges you wish to visit and arrange a specific date and time. Most colleges conduct tours on a regular basis and some have special event days or weekends, which are designed especially for prospective students. You should also look at the bulletin boards in the Counseling Office and the College and Career Center for upcoming events and visit opportunities.

When participating in a college visit, you will most likely meet with an admission counselor and take a campus tour. Come with a list of your questions and talk with students and faculty as well as admissions representatives. Ask to see a dorm room and perhaps attend a class or classes. When you arrange your visit, tell the admissions representative what your special interests are so that any special appointments can be set up ahead of time. If you cannot visit in person, take a virtual tour of the college or university. A good site is [www.ecampustours.com](http://www.ecampustours.com).

### Putting It Together

A comparison worksheet, like the one on the back cover of this booklet, can be very helpful once you have researched several schools. You will want to personalize it to include the categories most important to you. It is a way to see “at a glance” how the schools compare in those areas of greatest interest to you. It is also a handy way to access admissions requirements, testing, and deadlines.

#### **Decision Day — May 1**

*Each year on May 1, MHS Seniors are invited to the College & Career Center to celebrate Decision Day.*

*Seniors wear a shirt that represents their post-high school plans, have cake and watch a “senior slide show” to celebrate their next steps!*



# Application Process

The application process begins early in the senior year; therefore, it is important to have completed most of your research during your junior year. Every year, the counselors introduce juniors to resources available for researching colleges. This can be a very time consuming and stressful experience, but with some planning and organization, it can be productive and more enjoyable.

Once you have determined your final list of schools to which you are applying, you will need to be very aware of deadlines and application requirements. Sometimes it is helpful to create a chart that includes valuable information about your final list of colleges. On your chart, you should list the factors that are important to you in choosing a college (listed in the Self-Assessment section) as well as the important application information such as deadlines, school profile information, and what components are required in the application package. A sample is available on the back cover of this booklet. The application process often varies from school to school, some requiring several steps and others requiring a more straightforward process.

## Applications

A number of colleges use the *Common Application*, which allows you to apply to numerous schools with one application form. To access the form or submit the application electronically, go to [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org). Pay close attention to unique requirements; for example, some colleges may ask for letters of recommendation and others may not. By accessing the *Common Application* website, you will be able to see the list of schools that accept it and what specific requirements they each have.

Some colleges also use the *Coalition Application*, which is structured similarly to the *Common Application*. A few colleges have their only application on the Coalition website: University of Maryland, University of Washington, and Virginia Tech. To access the form or submit the application electronically, go to [www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org](http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org).

For those students using the *Common Application*, you will need to fill out the FERPA release form in the My Colleges

section. In addition, you will need to enter your Common App username in the “Colleges I’m Applying To” section of Naviance Student.

When applying to public colleges or universities, you will find that the applications are fairly simple to complete. Usually, you will be asked to provide an official transcript, a list of your senior classes, your ACT or SAT scores and answers to other basic kinds of questions. Therefore, applications to the University of Minnesota campuses or to any schools within the State University System are not quite as time consuming as some others.

If you are applying to any private colleges, you will find that, in general, most of these schools have applications that require you to share more information about yourself. You may want to develop a resume including activities, involvements, honors, and experiences that will help give a strong picture of your interests and accomplishments. This will allow you to be more efficient as you complete applications. If you have other applications that do not ask for this information, you may still want to include your resume so the college gets a broader perspective of who you are.

## Transcript Release

Most colleges will require an official copy of your high school transcript. Your transcript includes your classes, final grades and cumulative grade point average. For it to be official, it must be sent directly from MHS. Allow the time necessary for your transcript to arrive on time.

Complete a Transcript Release Form. You will need:

- College name
- Location of college
- Parent signature

Transcript Release Forms are available online in Naviance Student and in the College and Career Center.

**Allow a minimum of one week for processing your transcript request.**

## Application Process (continued)



Please allow one week for your Transcript Release Form to be processed. When you also are asking for a counselor recommendation to be submitted, you must complete the Senior Questionnaire form on Naviance Student. Your counselor will be able to write a more effective letter with this information. **You must allow three weeks for your counselor to complete a letter of recommendation;** don't leave this until the last minute! Please see your counselor personally to ask him or her about writing a letter of recommendation for you.

More extensive application packages usually involve some combination of the following components:

### Recommendations

Many colleges require or encourage that your application includes two to three school-related recommendations. Often, you are asked to include two letters from academic teachers and a letter from your counselor. Occasionally, you may want to include a special recommendation from a coach, activity advisor, or non-academic teacher who can provide an exceptional view of a particular area of interest or strength.

To be sure that your recommendations are effective and timely, you should complete the Senior Questionnaire on Naviance Student. Give teachers and your counselor at least three weeks to write the evaluation. Your teachers and counselor may also appreciate a copy of a resume to assist them in writing a thorough letter. Finally, a thank-you note is greatly appreciated for your teachers' efforts.

### The Essay

Don't let the essay paralyze you with fear! The admission representatives simply want to know you better and discover your unique qualities. Ask yourself the question, "what else would I like others to know about me that I feel is an important part of the *person* they may ultimately select?" When writing an essay or personal statement, a short and original essay is desirable. If a choice of topics is given, choose a topic, make a list of ideas to be covered in the essay, develop an outline, and write a first draft.

*Be certain the personal statement is broken into paragraphs. One long paragraph does not look good in a personal essay.*

Vary the structure and length of your sentences to provide interest. Use intelligent sentences and common sense. Use your own style and write in a direct, conversational manner. Make certain you have a smooth transition from one idea to another and from one paragraph to another, and be absolutely sure to check your spelling. Ask someone to proofread your work; often your English teacher or someone in the Writing Center is willing to review it for you.

### The Interview

A handful of colleges and universities require you to interview with one of their admission representatives. Other schools may give you the option of having an interview. If you do participate in an interview, go prepared. You should have some basic knowledge of the school, and a list of questions that you intend to ask. Remember, the interview is as much an opportunity for you to find out about the school, as for the school to find out about you. Appearance, mannerisms and first impressions are important. Mostly, **be yourself!** Be sure to send a thank-you note to your interviewer.

# Financing Your Education

Most financial aid is based on evidence of financial need, but there are also scholarships available that are merit-based. Financial aid packages that colleges offer students may include a combination of grant money, student loans, and/or work-study programs. Grants and scholarships are forms of *gift aid*, or free money, and student loans and work-study are forms of *self-help aid*, or money that is repaid or earned through job opportunities.

The MHS College and Career Center has a great deal of information regarding financial aid, and the Counseling Department puts scholarship information in Naviance Student that you should check throughout your senior year. The financial aid office of the college you are interested in is an important resource for you. Be sure to contact them for scholarships specific to the college, and for any questions you have regarding financial aid forms they require. The financial aid representatives at the colleges you are applying to are experts who want to assist you, so feel free to call them. Finally, be cautious about eliminating a college from consideration based on cost until you have applied for assistance and have been told what support you will be receiving.

## Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

All colleges and universities nationwide require that you file the FAFSA if you wish to apply for a financial aid package. The FAFSA is a federal form that asks for information about your family circumstances and financial status. After you have submitted your FAFSA, you will receive a SAR (student aid report) that will inform you of your EFC (estimated family contribution). This is the approximate amount that your family will be expected to pay for your education that academic year. If the cost of the college is more than your EFC, you have financial need and should be eligible for some type of financial aid. This information will be provided to the colleges that you are applying to, and they each, in turn, will offer you a financial aid package to consider.

Interactive web version of the  
Free Application for Federal Student Aid:

**[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)**

The FAFSA may be submitted online anytime after October 1. Submit the form as soon as possible after this date. Be sure to print a copy of your completed FAFSA.

## Profile

The CSS Profile is a financial aid form used by some colleges and scholarship programs. Check with the colleges and scholarship programs to which you are applying to determine what forms are required: <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org>

## Scholarships

Regardless of whether or not you apply for financial aid, you should consider applying for scholarships. Check the scholarship listings on Naviance Student. In addition, in the spring of your senior year, you should complete a Local Scholarship Application form, which will be available to you in the Counseling Office. By completing this one application, you will be able to compete for approximately twenty local scholarships (note: no applications are accepted after the deadline!). Also, be sure to ask the college financial aid representatives for any scholarships offered by the college that are applicable for you, and you should consider other private sources, such as employers of parents, your church, local foundations and civic groups. Several community organizations do allow you to apply through our Local Scholarship Application form, but some have their own application process. Finally, be sure to search for scholarship information on the Web. There are a number of free sources such as:

Financial Aid Information Page  
**[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)**

Comprehensive Scholarship List  
**[collegefactual.com](http://collegefactual.com)**

## Financing Your Education (continued)

### Scholarship Scams\*

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), in Washington, D.C., has a special enforcement and education campaign called “Project ScholarScam” to prevent fraudulent scholarship search services from operating, and to increase awareness among students and parents of warning signs if you are contacted by an agency.

#### Six warning signs of a scam:

1. *“This scholarship is guaranteed or your money back.”*  
No service can guarantee that it will get you a grant or scholarship.
2. *“The scholarship service will do all the work.”*  
Unfortunately, nobody else can fill out the personal information forms, write the essays, and supply the references that many scholarships may require.
3. *“The scholarship will cost some money.”*  
Before you send money to apply for a scholarship, investigate the sponsor.
4. *“You can’t get this information anywhere else.”*  
Scholarship directories are available in any large bookstore, public library, or in the MHS College and Career Center. You can also do extensive searches on the Web.
5. *“You are a finalist—in a contest you never entered,”* or *“You have been selected by a national foundation to receive a scholarship.”*  
Most legitimate scholarship programs do not seek out particular applicants. Before you send any money, investigate the program to be sure that it is legitimate.
6. *“The scholarship service needs your credit card or checking account number in advance.”* Get information in writing first.

For assistance in recognizing a scam, check out this scholarship scam alert:

[www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml](http://www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml)

To report and stop a scholarship scam, contact the Federal Trade Commission at P.O. Box 996, Washington, D.C. 20580. On the web, go to [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov).

\*Information in this section was obtained from *Peterson’s Guide to College Planning and Career Exploration*.

### Tuition Reciprocity

The Minnesota Higher Education Services Office administers tuition reciprocity agreements with our neighboring states, which typically means that if you attend a public college in those states, non-resident admission fees and tuition are reduced (or eliminated). Minnesota has tuition reciprocity agreements with the states of Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota. It also has an agreement with the Canadian Province of Manitoba and a limited agreement with the State of Iowa which includes one school in Iowa: Iowa Lakes Community College. If you are a Minnesota resident, the **Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP)** provides you with the opportunity to be eligible for tuition reduction at a limited number of Midwest public and private schools and programs of study in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin.

If you are a Minnesota student, the fastest way to apply is by using the online application. If you apply electronically, you do not need to complete a paper application. If you are not able to apply online, you can get a paper application from participating reciprocity colleges or universities. You can print or download a paper application from the Office of Higher Education Web site: [www.ohe.state.mn.us](http://www.ohe.state.mn.us) or request it by writing to:

**Reciprocity  
Office of Higher Education  
1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350  
St. Paul, MN 55108  
Tel: (651) 642-0567 or (800) 657-3866**

If you are a Minnesota resident and enroll in a North Dakota reciprocity college or university within 12 months of graduating from a Minnesota high school, you may not need to complete a reciprocity application. Just present your official Minnesota high school transcript to the participating reciprocity college or university. Check with the college to make sure it participates.

If you are a Minnesota resident attending any public college or university in South Dakota, your eligibility for reciprocity benefits will be determined by the campus you attend. You should not submit an application to the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.



## Financing Your Education (continued)

### Wisconsin

As a Minnesota high school graduate, you are eligible for reciprocity benefits if you attend any Wisconsin technical college or any two- or four-year public college or university in Wisconsin.

#### What Rate Do You Pay?

New Minnesota undergraduate students attending participating Wisconsin schools pay the higher of the tuition charged by the Wisconsin college attended or the tuition charged at a similar Minnesota school. The reverse also holds true (see the following examples).

If you are planning on attending:

- The University of Wisconsin-Madison: your tuition will be the higher of the tuition charged by the University of Wisconsin-Madison or by the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.
- The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee: your tuition will be the higher of the tuition charged by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee or by the University of Minnesota-Duluth.
- The University of Wisconsin-River Falls, or any other University of Wisconsin comprehensive college: your tuition will be the higher of the tuition charged by the Wisconsin campus attended or by a Minnesota State University.
- A University of Wisconsin System College (a two-year school): your tuition will be the higher of the tuition charged by the Wisconsin campus attended or by a Minnesota Community College.
- A Wisconsin Technical College: you'll pay what a Wisconsin resident pays for tuition at that school (apply directly to the school to receive your reciprocity benefits).

To determine the exact tuition rate, you should directly contact the school(s) you are interested in attending.

### North Dakota

As a Minnesota high school graduate, you are eligible for reciprocity if you attend any North Dakota public college or university.

#### What Rate Do You Pay?

If you are an undergraduate student from Minnesota attending:

- North Dakota State University or the University of North Dakota: your tuition will be what you'd pay if you were attending a Minnesota State University.
- Another North Dakota public four-year school: your tuition will be slightly higher than the North Dakota resident rate.
- A North Dakota public two-year school: you'll pay approximately the same tuition as if you were attending a Minnesota community or technical college.

To determine the exact tuition rate, you should directly contact the school(s) you are interested in attending.

*“Unless you try  
to do something  
beyond what  
you have already  
mastered, you will  
never grow.”*

— **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

## Financing Your Education (continued)

### South Dakota

As a Minnesota high school graduate, you are eligible for reciprocity benefits if you attend any South Dakota public college or university.

#### What Rate Do You Pay?

If you are an undergraduate student and plan to attend:

- South Dakota State University, the University of South Dakota, or another South Dakota public four-year school, your tuition and fees will be about the same as if you were attending a similar Minnesota school.
- South Dakota technical schools in Watertown, Mitchell, Sioux Falls, or Rapid City, you'll pay the South Dakota resident tuition and fee rate (contact the school directly for residency and tuition rates).
- A professional program at the University of South Dakota, you'll pay no more than 150 percent of the South Dakota resident tuition and fee rate.

To determine the exact tuition rate, you should directly contact the school(s) you are interested in attending.

### Iowa

#### Who is Eligible for Tuition Reciprocity Benefits?

There is no statewide reciprocal agreement between Minnesota and Iowa. However, there is a limited reciprocity agreement between Minnesota West Community & Technical College and Iowa Lakes Community College (with campuses in Algona, Estherville, Emmetsburg, Spencer and Spirit Lake).

### Manitoba

As a Minnesota high school graduate, you are eligible for reciprocity benefits if you enroll at one of the nine participating universities and community colleges in Manitoba. Students should apply directly to the college they choose to attend.

#### What Rate Do You Pay?

Minnesota students who attend participating schools in Manitoba pay the resident tuition rate for that school. To determine the exact tuition rate, students should directly contact the school(s) they're interested in attending.

#### What Are the Participating Manitoba Schools?

- Assiniboine Community College
- Brandon University
- Booth University College
- Canadian Mennonite University
- Providence University College
- Red River Community College
- Universitaire de Saint-Boniface
- University of Manitoba
- University of Winnipeg

### Midwest Student Exchange Program

As a Minnesota high school graduate, you are eligible for reduced tuition charges at a limited number of Midwest public and private schools and programs of study in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin.

#### What Rate Do You Pay?

Students participating in the Midwest Student Exchange Program pay up to 150 percent of the resident tuition rate (which is still below the non-resident rate) at participating public schools or a 10 percent reduction in tuition at participating private schools.

**When applying to an eligible school,** students must indicate that they are Minnesota residents interested in being admitted as a MSEP student. The school will evaluate the student's request for MSEP status and respond directly to the student.

#### Where Can I Get More MSEP Information?

Brochures listing eligible colleges, universities and programs of study are available in the Guidance Office, from the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office, and online at the Midwestern Higher Education Compact ([www.mhec.org](http://www.mhec.org)).

(Information in this section was obtained from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.)

# Glossary (for Post High School Planning)

**Associate Degree** – A two-year community college degree (Associate of Arts; Associate of Science).

**Bachelor Degree** – A four-year college degree (Bachelor of Arts; Bachelor of Science).

**CEEB Number** – The individual code that has been assigned to your high school. The CEEB Number for Minnetonka High School is **240-780**.

**Cumulative Record** – The complete record of all courses and grades earned. Your high school transcript contains your cumulative record and cumulative GPA.

**Early Action** – An admission plan used primarily in highly selective colleges. Under Early Action, you follow an accelerated application process and usually apply by November 1. You will be notified of a decision by mid-December, but, if you are accepted, you still have until May 1 to let the institution know your enrollment decision.

**Early Decision** – A binding admission plan offered to well-qualified applicants who are definitely committed to their choice of college. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance or refusal in December. Acceptance under Early Decision requires you to withdraw applications at other colleges.

**Impacted Program or Major** – An overcrowded program or major in which there are many more applications than available spaces; supplementary admissions criteria must be met for consideration.

**Liberal Arts College** – A college in which the emphasis is on a program of philosophy, literature, history, languages, and basic science.

**Naviance Student** – A Web-based program which helps students organize their college search and applications.

**Open Admission** – An admission policy that accepts students without regard to the criteria of grade point average and/or test scores.

**Private College/University** – A school that is not supported by state taxes.

**Regular Admission** – The application process that requires application materials to be submitted no later than the specified deadline date printed in the college catalog or on the application form. Admission responses are usually received in March.

**Rolling Admission** – The admission plan in which a completed application is acted on as soon as it is received. Students are admitted on a continuing basis.

**Secondary School Reports** – Often called a Counselor Recommendation, many selective colleges and universities require these to be submitted from your high school counselor. Well in advance of the application deadline (allow at least three weeks), you must complete the Senior Questionnaire on Naviance Student.

*“Watch your thoughts, they become your beliefs. Watch your beliefs, they become your words. Watch your words, they become your actions. Watch your actions, they become your habits. Watch your habits, they become your character.”*

**— Vince Lombardi**

# College Comparison Worksheet

There are many possible ways to organize your college information. These are some ideas put forth by ACT.

<b>College Name</b>			
<b>Location</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Distance from home</li></ul>			
<b>Size</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- enrollment</li><li>- physical size of campus</li></ul>			
<b>Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- type of school (2 or 4 yr.)</li><li>- school setting (urban, rural)</li><li>- location &amp; size of nearest city</li><li>- co-ed., male, female</li><li>- religious affiliation</li></ul>			
<b>Admission Requirements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- deadline</li><li>- tests required</li><li>- average test scores, GPA</li><li>- special requirements</li></ul>			
<b>Academics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- intended major</li><li>- special requirements</li><li>- student-faculty ratio</li><li>- typical class size</li></ul>			
<b>College Expenses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- tuition, room &amp; board</li><li>- estimated total budget</li><li>- application fee, deposits</li></ul>			
<b>Financial Aid</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- deadline</li><li>- required forms</li><li>- % receiving aid</li><li>- scholarships</li></ul>			
<b>Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- residence hall requirement</li><li>- availability</li><li>- types and sizes</li><li>- food plan</li></ul>			
<b>Facilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- academic</li><li>- recreational</li><li>- other</li></ul>			
<b>Activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- clubs, organizations</li><li>- Greek life</li><li>- athletics, intramurals</li><li>- other</li></ul>			
<b>Campus Visits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- when</li><li>- special opportunities</li></ul>			