BELLMORE-MERRICK
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

POST SECONDARY PLANNING GUIDE
CLASS OF 2020

ONE VOICE, ONE MESSAGE
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Dear Students and Parents:

I hope you will find the following information about the college application process useful.

This booklet contains a helpful list of each of the steps in the college application process, and it represents this information in calendar form so you may plan a month at a time.

Although this material is meant to help guide you through the application process, it is not meant to take the place of your school counselor, who is a valuable resource. He or she is your most accessible source of information about colleges, and will help you define and clarify your goals, suggest colleges that will meet your needs, and serve as the liaison between your high school and college admissions officials. The more you keep your counselor informed, the more your counselor will be able to assist you. Applying to and selecting a college is a process that should involve students, their parents, and their school counselors.

Sincerely,

John DeTommaso
Superintendent of Schools
Before You Begin

Tips Regarding College Planning from Former Bellmore-Merrick Students

- Take initiative; your high school counselor is a great contact for getting helpful information, but you have to research as well.

- Know your transcript; improve your study habits and re-take your SAT and/or ACT, if necessary.

- The time you spend on college applications should be like a part-time job. Take time to develop an essay that "gives you an edge"; essays are important. Demonstrate that you're creative and interesting. Do not come across as though you are perfect; come across human.

- Read everything on your applications before signing.

- Keep things organized. Keep a folder of all the things needed for a scholarship and college application. You will need the same information over and over again. Research and apply for scholarships.

- Make lists and prioritize them. Keep a notebook of your notes. Plan wisely and don't procrastinate.

- Visit many colleges. Get lost...literally! You'll see more than what you were shown on the tour. While you're searching, ask random people questions to learn even more. Make sure you visit the colleges you are interested in, otherwise, why apply?

- Financial aid is out there; everyone can find a way to afford college.

- Talk with your parents as they want the best for you. They'll ask lots of questions and they'll force you to do some things, but it is really for the best.

- Read and review this guide. Work with your counselor and never give up the dream!

- Mid-year grades are sent to all colleges; **DON'T SLACK OFF IN YOUR SENIOR YEAR!**
TIMETABLE

JUNIOR YEAR - Spring

- Meet with your School Counselor to begin the planning process
- Become familiar with Naviance and other college search tools
- Organize high school activities in the form of a resume/activity sheet
- Register to take SAT/ACT in the Spring [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) and/or [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)
- Inquire as to whether your college(s) of interest require SAT II Subject Tests
- Speak directly to teachers at the end of May/early June re: letters of recommendation
- Explore eligibility requirements if interested in Division I/II collegiate athletics [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org)
- Discuss with parents; visiting college campuses of interest, campus size preferences, academic programs, distance from home, cost, etc.
- Continue to keep your grades up and study!
- Submit student brag sheet/parent brag sheet/activity resume to your counselor before June 30

SENIOR YEAR - Summer Before

- Visit colleges that interest you; call ahead for tours and appointments
- Finalize your list of colleges; include “target”, “reach”, and “safety” schools
- Keep a college calendar of all admission deadlines of your schools of interest, especially if you plan to apply Early Action or Early Decision
- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) if you plan on competing in Division I or II sports
- Register for the Fall SAT/ACT exam

SENIOR YEAR

- Schedule an appointment with your counselor to review your list of schools
- Update your activity sheet
- Identify what kind of application each school you apply to will accept
- Create a Common Application account and start working on completing it
- Work on your college essay, ask teachers to assist you if necessary
- Arrange to take the SAT/ACT if you have not done so
- Follow up in person with teachers you have asked to write your letters of recommendation
- Check application deadlines, especially Early Action/Early Decision
- Complete TRANSCRIPT REQUEST FORMS found in the Registrar’s office for each school you are applying to, including the NCAA Eligibility Center to play Division I & II sports
- Fill out our FAFSA form starting October 1st for the following school year
- Send SAT/ACT scores directly to the schools you are applying to
- Research and apply for scholarships (read the school bulletins)
- Visit college campuses and/or arrange an overnight stay
WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST SUITS YOU

**Non-Restrictive Application Plans: NON-BINDING**

- **Regular Decision**: Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.
- **Rolling Admission**: Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.
- **Early Action (EA)**: Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution’s regular response date.

**Restrictive Application Plans**

- **Early Decision (ED)**: Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early. **THIS IS A BINDING COMMITMENT.**
- **Restrictive Early Action (REA)**: Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm. **THIS IS A NON-BINDING COMMITMENT.**

**WHAT COLLEGES LOOK AT**

- Three-Year High School Academic Record - Transcript
- Senior Year Courses and Mid-Year Grades
- Rigor of Courses
- GPA
- Standardized Test Scores
- Activity Resume (Clubs, Jobs, Sports, Community Service, Summer Programs, etc.)
- Letters of Recommendation
- Well-Written Essay(s)
- Special Talent (Athletics, Portfolio, Music/Theatrical Audition)
- Demonstrated Interest (Some Colleges)
- Interviews (Some Colleges)

**WHERE TO BEGIN**

**STEP 1**
Create a folder for each college. Include in it the following:

- Application Form
- College Catalogue
- Financial Aid Material
- Correspondence Between You and School
- Your Impression of College Visit
- Other Relevant Material

**STEP 2**
Decide upon your list of college applications.

- Safety Schools
- Target Schools
- Reach Schools

Your list of schools should range from approximately five to ten institutions. If you are undecided about a particular school, put the folder aside. Come back to that college after you have completed the remainder of your list and determine whether you wish to attend the school. Remember, do not apply to any university that you do not wish to attend. A school is not considered “safe” if you really don’t want to go there; why bother applying.
PREPARING FOR A SELECTIVE COLLEGE

The Nation’s Selective Colleges Demand More Than a High School Diploma – Choose College Preparatory Courses

Success in challenging college preparatory courses is the best preparation for a selective college. The more demanding your high school course of study, the better your chances for admission to and success at the selective college of your choice. Nearly all selective colleges demand a full complement of college preparatory work. Use the descriptions below as a guideline for selective courses.

| Mathematics: Four years. Courses in more advanced mathematics are considered very desirable. |
| World Languages: Five Credits are seen as desirable. |
| Laboratory Science: Four years: Earth Science, Living Environment, Chemistry, and Physics |
| Advanced Placement Dual Enrollment Courses: Advanced placement courses demonstrate your ability to handle advanced work. Selective colleges view advanced placement courses as a sign of your willingness to accept a challenge and as evidence of your intellectual curiosity. The members of most college admissions committees will take special note of students with advanced placement courses on their high school transcript. However, this does not mean that you must take advanced placement courses to be admitted to a selective college. |
| Other Courses: Courses such as music, art, and business are valuable complements to the courses previously listed. They develop personal skills, promote aesthetic awareness, and foster recreational interests. |

WHAT COUNTS MOST

Success in a demanding college preparatory program is the first priority for a selective college when it reviews an application for admission. Yet, it is the combination of courses, grade-point average, standardized test scores, out-of-class experiences, and even the essay on the application that determine your preparedness for a selective college.

Application: You cannot be admitted if you do not complete an application to the college (or use the Common Application Form available for most colleges and universities). Colleges review the application to learn about your in-school and extracurricular activities. Selective colleges also require an essay. They use the essay to learn about you and also to judge your ability to express your thoughts in writing (usually submitted in the fall of your senior year of high school).

Secondary School Record: Your high school record carries a great deal of weight. Slightly lower grades in more rigorous courses may be more important than higher grades in an easier program (transcripts are usually submitted after the first semester of your senior year in high school).

Scholastic Assessment Tests: The SATs or ACTs are required by most selective colleges. However, the importance a college places on the tests varies greatly. Standardized test scores are seldom the most important factor in an admissions decision, and most colleges do not have cut-off scores (usually taken no later than fall of the senior year).

SAT Subject Tests: Selective colleges usually require or recommend specific Subject Tests. Some colleges consider them as factors in the admissions process; others use them to place students in the appropriate level of work when they enroll.

Recommendations: Recommendations from your high school counselor and teacher(s) are taken seriously by most selective colleges. The colleges use these as evidence of your potential, character, and classroom effort. Key people at your school who know you well are best able to give the college a fair and valuable assessment of you and your work (must be sent to the college prior to the application deadline).

Out-of-Class Activities: Selective colleges seek students with a wide variety of interests and experiences. These colleges realize that the intellectual ability and the varied perspectives of their students contribute to the overall educational climate. Community service, student government, athletics, overseas study, unusual hobbies, as well as participation in theatre, music, art, dance, or academic clubs are viewed positively by selective colleges. However, participation in out-of-class activities will not compensate for a poor academic record.

The Interview: If a college you are considering encourages interviews, be sure to take advantage of this opportunity. The interview is an excellent way to determine if a college will really “fit” you. Admissions counselors at the college can answer most of your questions. In some cases, an interview may make the difference in whether you are admitted or not. If you believe you may be a “marginal” candidate for admission to a specific college, request an interview. However, do your homework before you go. Have good questions and be sure you can explain why that college is attractive to you.
THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR SENIOR YEAR PROGRAM

The following letters were received by or about high school seniors regarding their senior year course work.

1. SUNY AT STONY BROOK
Former Director of Undergraduate Admissions

“I have recently reviewed your final high school transcript and am disappointed to note the significant decline in your senior year grades. In your acceptance letter, I reminded you that enrollment is “contingent upon successful completion of your high school graduation requirements”. I must ask you to write me a letter of explanation as soon as possible and by August 12 at the latest. Please provide reasons for your poor grades and suggest to me how you intend to improve you grades in a more rigorous and competitive environment. I am sorry to alarm you at this point, but frankly I am very concerned by the downward trend in your high school performance. You would not have been accepted based on your senior year.”

2. UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
Former Dean of Admissions

“The admissions office is in the process of reviewing final school reports for the incoming freshman class. We note that your grades include a “D”. As you know, you were offered admissions primarily on the basis of your outstanding academic performance. Since the final report represents a departure from your previous level of achievement, we would like to emphasize that Pennsylvania is a competitive institution which will demand your most diligent efforts during your undergraduate years. As you prepare to matriculate in September, I hope that you plan to pursue your academic goals with the same commitment you have previously demonstrated. It is advisable for you to make an appointment when you come to campus with the Dean’s office to discuss your academic standing.”

3. TUFTS UNIVERSITY
Former Dean

“In April we were pleased to offer you admission to the entering freshman class. This offer was extended to you contingent upon your continuing demonstration of the academic and personal qualities that led the committee to offer you admissions to the university. A recent review of your final grades showed a decline in your academic performance. Our experience is that students who have a weak final semester in secondary school often have difficulty regaining their motivation for the challenging freshman year at Tufts.”

4. MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Former Associate Director

“You were admitted to Michigan State University earlier in March. At that time, we sent you a certificate of admission and an admissions letter. I am sending you another copy of that letter highlighting the last sentence of the fourth paragraph. We recently received a copy of your seventh semester grades. Your grades have declined the second quarter in Writing, Pre-Calculus, and of course, Physics. You will want to get yourself back on track. Do the type of work that resulted in your admission to the University and of which you are obviously capable of. Don’t let this senioritis continue to erode your academic progress. We’ll be expecting to see much improved academic work when we receive your final transcript.”

5. UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
Former Dean of Admissions & Financial Aid

“Research indicates that students whose senior grades show a downward trend often face academic difficulties their first year at the University of Rhode Island. The University would like to make the transition to college as smooth as possible thereby avoiding an unsuccessful freshman year.

After review of the final transcript, if we note a serious decline or reason for concern in academic performance, the student and high school guidance office will be sent one of the following letters:

• A LETTER OF CONCERN – A letter of concern expresses our disappointment and asks the student to question their motivation and ability to handle the challenges of a college curriculum.
• **A LETTER OF SUSPENSION** – A letter of suspension cancels the acceptance and requires the student to contact the Admissions Office in writing regarding their circumstances. Upon receipt of written communication, the application will be reevaluated and may or may not be reinstated.

• **A LETTER OF REVOCATION** – A letter of revocation is the cancellation of the original acceptance. If a revoked student wishes to be considered at a later date, an interview would be required with an admissions counselor to discuss the possibility.”

6. **UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**  
   *Former Director of Admissions*

   "Dear Guidance Director:

   In May, we sent the enclosed list of students from your school, who have been admitted as freshmen to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Since most, if not all of these students were admitted with high school work in progress, I am asking that you report any changes in performance which might affect a student’s admissibility. A change in which we are most interested is failure or withdrawal of an “academic” course during the senior year. Please pay particular attention to changes in senior year mathematics or foreign language."
# FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE

## COST

- What are the costs for tuition? Room and board? Are there other fees?
- How much did costs increase from last year to this year?
- Is there a difference in the cost for in-state and out-of-state students?
- Are accepted students required to place deposits for tuition and housing? Are these refundable?
- By when must accepted students decide whether they will attend?
- Are deposits required each year for returning students?
- When do the bills have to be paid?

## FINANCIAL AID

- What percent of students receive financial aid based on financial need?
- What percent of students receive scholarships based on academic ability?
- What would be a typical financial aid package for a freshman?
- What percent of those who apply for financial aid receive it?
- Will my financial aid be adjusted if my need increases?
- What are the financial aid application procedures and deadlines?
- When are financial aid applicants notified of their awards?
- How long do they have to respond? Is there a tuition payment plan?
- Are there campus jobs available? Are there off-campus jobs as well?

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- What high school courses are required?
- Are entrance tests required? Which ones? What scores are acceptable?
- Is a certain grade point average or class rank required?
- Will my activities and school involvement be considered?
- Is there an essay on the application? Is it read?
- Is there an early decision or early action plan?
- On what basis are applicants accepted?
- Are personal interviews or letters of recommendation required?
- Do certain majors have special requirements?
- What percent of applicants are accepted?
- Can admission denials be appealed?
- What are the dates for filing applications?
<table>
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<tr>
<th>ACADEMICS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What is the average class size? Largest? Smallest?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How many students in last year’s freshman class returned for their sophomore year?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What was the grade point average for the freshman class last year?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What is the college’s procedure for student orientation, class placement, and scheduling? Are classes guaranteed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How is a faculty advisor assigned to students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What services does the school offer for the student who is undecided about a major?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How many students complete a degree? What are the most popular majors?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are students taught by full-time faculty members, graduate assistants, or a combination of both?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What types of additional services are provided by the school at no additional cost to the student (e.g. tutoring, career and personal counseling, developmental reading and study skills workshops, job placement)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is there an honors program? What are the qualifications for entry?</td>
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<th>COLLEGE CHARACTERISTICS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What is the surrounding community like?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is the college public, private, church affiliated?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What is the current student enrollment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What special or unique programs are offered?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does the college have special programs for transfer students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What is the academic calendar (semesters, quarters)?</td>
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<tr>
<th>STUDENT POPULATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Where do the majority of students come from?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Do most of the students commute or live on campus?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What types of student activities are there? Are sororities and fraternities on campus?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What athletic programs are available?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is the surrounding community supportive of the college?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does the college have a campus visitation program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is housing available/guaranteed for freshmen? Is it available for all four years?</td>
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<tr>
<th>SOCIAL LIFE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What is the average age of the student body?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What is the male-to-female ratio?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What percent of students reside on-campus?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are dorms co-ed or single sex?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is it a “suitcase college” where all the students leave on the weekends?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What are the procedures for selecting a roommate?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What are some of the rules and regulations that govern campus and dormitory life?</td>
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MYTHS ABOUT THE COLLEGE SELECTION PROCESS

Learning about colleges is an arduous task, one to which many students simply do not allocate sufficient time and thought. The beginning of the college selection process is also fraught with many myths and misconceptions. The most common myths are:

**MYTH #1: THERE IS ONE PERFECT COLLEGE FOR ME**

Understanding that there is no one perfect college for you, but several good alternatives, will make the application process more exciting. If you narrow your sights to only one college, you may spend too much time worrying about getting into that particular school. This will prevent you from making a systematic search for a variety of institutions where you would be happy.

**MYTH #2: I NEED TO DECIDE ON A CAREER BEFORE I CAN CHOOSE A COLLEGE**

The average college student changes majors two or three times in the course of four years of college, and most college graduates change careers three to five times in their lifetime.

**MYTH #3: WE CAN ONLY AFFORD A LOW-PRICED COLLEGE**

Do not let initial costs alone determine your future. Too often students rule out some colleges because the total cost appears to be more than the family can afford. This may not be the case when all resources of financial aid are explored. Private colleges, in order to attract students from all income levels, offer significant amounts of financial aid, and in the long run, may be more affordable than a less expensive public institution.

**MYTH #4: MOST STUDENTS GET REJECTED BY THE COLLEGE OF THEIR CHOICE**

Not so! Over 92% of all students go to their first or second choice college. Searching for a variety of colleges where your needs can be met and ensuring that the colleges to which you apply include different levels of selectivity, can increase your chances for acceptance, and ultimately your happiness.

**MYTH #5: COLLEGES WANT ME TO TAKE AS MANY AP COURSES AS POSSIBLE**

Colleges want well rounded students who **do not** overextend themselves. Students who plan to attend college should take at least one AP/College Level Course in high school.

**MYTH #6: I’VE NEVER HEARD OF THIS COLLEGE, SO IT CAN’T BE ANY GOOD**

Most people know very little about colleges. The average self-educated individual can probably name only 100 of the 3,000 plus colleges, and these tend to be the older eastern colleges, the large state universities, those with outstanding athletic teams, and those that happen to be near their home. It is important to remember that a college which might be a good match for you may be one which is unknown to you now. And some of the schools you have heard the most about may prove not to be a good match for you. It is important to keep an open mind throughout the entire process.

**MYTH #7: SCHOOLS ARE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO REJECT ME**

Colleges pride themselves on finding ways to accept students who they feel are a good match or fit for their college/university.
**COLLEGE PLANNING WORKSHEET**

Name: ___________________________________________ Date: ________________

Counselor: _______________________________________

Tentative Career You Are Considering: ________________________________

Tentative Major You Are Considering: ________________________________

1. Type of post high school institution desired (you may check more than one):
   - 4 yr. private _____ School of Nursing _____
   - 4 yr. public _____ Business School _____
   - 2 yr. private _____ Trade or Vocation _____
   - 2 yr. public _____

2. Geographic Location:
   - New York _____ Mid-West _____ Urban _____ Northeast _____
   - West _____ Suburban _____ South _____ Rural _____

3. Size of College:
   - Less than 1,000 _____ 1,000-3,000 _____ 3,000 – 10,000 _____
   - 10,000 – 15,000 _____ Over 15,000 _____

4. Cost: Discuss with your family the approximate amount you would consider paying. This will cover the cost of tuition and room and board. ________________________________

5. Special Factors:
   - Religious affiliations: __________________________________________
   - Student activities/athletics: _______________________________________
   - Military training: ________________________________________________

6. Test Scores:
   - PSAT: ______________
   - SAT: ______________
     - R & W Test: _____  Reading Test: _____  Writing Test: _____  Math Test: _____  Math Test: _____  Total Score: _____  Date Taken: _____

   - SAT Subject Tests:
     - Subject: _____ Score: _____ Date Taken: _____

   - ACT: E _____ M _____ R _____ SR _____ C _____ Date Taken: _____

7. Current Weighted Average: ______________

8. Other Factors You Are Looking For In A College:

9. Names of colleges you are considering
Naviance is a website where students can investigate their interests, research careers, and explore college options. Additionally, this site provides many other useful tools as students prepare for the next step in their educational endeavors. It is important for both students and parents to become familiar with Naviance as this tremendous resource tool will be utilized throughout high school and for the college application process. The use of these various tools will certainly facilitate the transition from high school to college.

Some of the resources on the website will enable students to:

- Complete career interest surveys
- Research colleges and scholarship opportunities
- Explore personality types
- Compare colleges and acceptance rates (as well as your high school’s rates for the past several years)
- Explore careers and job clusters
- Build a résumé
- Register for college rep visits in guidance during your senior year

Naviance's scattergrams show the acceptance history of students from their high school at a specific college or university using the historical average GPAs and test scores from the high school. A Naviance scattergram is a scatter plot that shows students (without identifying them) from your high school who were accepted, denied, and wait-listed by a specific college using symbols in the graph legend.

Naviance provides students with a variety of features, including college research and matching tools, course planning, career assessment and personality tests, and surveys to help students connect what they are doing in school to what they would like to do once they complete their education.

Additionally, Naviance's integration with "The Common Application" facilitates the submission of college applications, as well as online submission of transcripts, school forms, and recommendations through Naviance eDocs.

Naviance can be accessed via the district website: www.bellmore-merrick.k12.ny.us and going to the Counseling page of your high school and clicking on the Naviance link.

*See your counselor if you need to reset your NAVIANCE password.
VISITING THE SCHOOLS

Visiting college campuses is an important part of the college planning process. It helps the student to form opinions regarding the academics, social life, and living environment of a college or university.

The best way for you to learn about the educational programs, faculty, facilities, atmosphere, and spirit of a college is to visit the campus when the college is in session. Visiting schools in the spring of your junior year is a good time to start. If you cannot visit the campus during the school year, summertime is another possibility.

Take advantage of being on a college campus and discover as much as you can on your campus visit. Test the claims made in the brochures. See for yourself how good the library will be for your particular interest. Will you be able to talk to the professors? What sports programs will be open to you? Is the social atmosphere congenial to your personality? How is the food in the cafeteria? Did you see the residence halls?

Here are some questions you may want to ask your campus tour guide:

1. What's the largest class you've had here?
2. Who teaches your classes: graduate assistants or professors?
3. Is there a required core curriculum? How restrictive is it?
4. How adequate is the library? Are you able to get the books you need when you want them?
5. When do you have to declare you major? What are the most popular majors?
6. Tell me about housing. Are some dorms much better than others? Do many students live off campus?
7. How competitive is the student body? Do students seem to work primarily for grades? What is the attitude toward working hard?
8. Do TAs teach classes? How available are your professors?
9. Can you tell me anything first-hand about the French, English, or History departments?
10. What's the biggest issue on campus right now?
11. What are the biggest issues in national and international politics? Are students politically active?
12. What percentage of students study abroad at some time?
13. What impact do fraternities, sororities, and athletics have here?
14. What happens here on weekends? Do many students leave campus on the weekend?
15. How active is student government?
16. Are the arts supported here? Which areas are strong?
17. What do you think is the greatest shortcoming of this college?
18. What do you like best about your experience and education here?
19. Is this a diverse community? Where do students come from?
20. If you could attend another college now, where would you go? Why?
21. Why did you choose this school? To which others did you apply?
22. What is your retention rate?
23. Is housing guaranteed for four years?
24. Are merit awards renewable every year?

Other Suggestions:

1. Pick up a copy of the latest newspaper.
2. Find a professor and get his/her perspective.
3. Meet a coach if you are interested in a sport.
4. Meet the head of an activity/interest you want to pursue in college.
5. Eat lunch on campus.
6. After the tour, walk around on your own; even talk to some students.

Upon completion of your visit, write in your responses to the issues on the college visit summary sheet. Take pictures of the campus with your cell phone. Do this for each college visited, and then compare your summaries for each. This will keep your thoughts fresh in your mind before the campuses begin to seem the same.
THE INTERVIEW

Interviews can be the most nerve-racking part of the whole process. At many schools the interview is little more than an information session. Be sure to check each college’s interview policy before you visit. At those where it is optional, our advice is that you arrange for an interview if you feel that seeing an admissions officer face-to-face will improve your chances, or if you have any questions you particularly want answered. You’ll help yourself if you make a good impression, but in almost every case, your grades, test scores, extracurricular activities, written application, and school recommendations will carry more weight. REMEMBER: SCHEDULE ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS WELL IN ADVANCE!

There are three keys to a successful interview:

1. Make yourself stand out from the crowd.
2. Don’t try to be something you’re not.
3. Be yourself.

In other words, if you make the interviewer remember you by highlighting things about yourself that are really worth remembering, chances are you’ve had an excellent interview. The interview, like the entire admissions process, can be a productive learning experience. At its best, it can even be fun. Try to look at your interviewer as a resource who may help you better understand the college.

A successful interview is one that you enjoy. Good interviews humanize the admissions process. Look at your college interview as an opportunity to have direct, human contact with the admissions process. Relax and make the most of it.

QUICK DO’S AND DON’TS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO:</th>
<th>DON’T:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Turn off cell phone</td>
<td>• Lie or exaggerate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be prompt</td>
<td>• Be negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be honest</td>
<td>• Yawn, slouch, or stretch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listen; take time to reflect</td>
<td>• Chew gum, hair, or stretch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be energetic and enthusiastic</td>
<td>• Recite a prepared speech or brag</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Make eye contact</td>
<td>• Interrupt your interviewer</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Give a firm handshake</td>
<td>• Be disinterested or nonchalant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use the name of your interviewer</td>
<td>• Criticize your teachers, school, or friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bring a transcript with SAT or ACT scores</td>
<td>• Bring an elaborate portfolio, résumé, or display</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dress comfortably and neatly</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read the catalogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ask questions</td>
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</table>
QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT BE ASKED IN AN INTERVIEW

These are sample questions you might be asked by an interviewer; think about how you would answer them. Even if you are not asked any of these, but you’ve thought about them, you will be well prepared.

1. How do you like your high school? What has been the most positive experience you’ve had? The most negative?

2. If I visited your high school for a few days, what would I find is your role in the school/community? What would your teachers say were your greatest strengths as a person? As a student? Likewise, what about your shortcomings or weaknesses?

3. What is the most significant contribution you’ve made to your high school?

4. What is the overriding consideration in your choice of a college?

5. What are some of your personal and career goals for your future?

6. Tell me about a particular class in which you found yourself intellectually stimulated.

7. What is your reason for participating in athletics, student government, newspaper, etc.?

8. Since you are interested in science and math, why are you interested in a liberal arts college rather than a more technical institution?

9. How and in what ways do you expect, plan, and hope to transfer your secondary school contributions, achievements, and activities to the college level?

10. What has been your favorite subject in high school?

11. What might you study in college?

12. What books or articles have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking? Have you read deeply into any one author or field?

13. What events, if any, would you deem critical in your life thus far?

14. What societal pressures do you feel? Describe ways in which you "go your own way."

15. How have you spent your summers?

16. What are your reactions to current events?

17. Describe some issues that you have made you indignant over the past year.

18. How would you describe yourself as a person?

19. Have you ever thought of not going to college? What would you do?

20. How do you spend your free time?

21. Do you have any questions?

SAMPLE Thank You Letter

(Date)

Dear (Name of Interviewer/Guide):

Thank you for spending time with me on (date of visit/interview).

I enjoyed our discussion of (topic, subject, etc.) and I feel that I have a strong understanding of the strengths of (College name) as a result.

Sincerely,

(Your Signature)
# ACTIVITY RECORD

**NAME:** ___________________________________________ **COUNSELOR:** _________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
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<td>10 11 12</td>
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<td><strong>Services, School/Community</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-School Related (including interests, hobbies)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Summer Activities</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Work Activities</strong></td>
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WRITING YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY

Top 10 Tips for Writing a College Essay

1. **Start early.** More time equals less stress. You’ll have plenty of time to give the essay your best effort.

2. **Be yourself.** One of the biggest mistakes students make is writing what they think others want to hear rather than about an issue, event, or person they care about. An essay like that is not just boring to write; it’s boring to read. What interests you? What do you love to talk about? Write about that. Think of your essay as a creative way to help college officials get to know you as a person.

3. **Be honest.** College admission officers have read hundreds, even thousands of essays. They are masters at discovering any form of plagiarism. Don’t risk your college career by buying an essay off the internet or getting someone else to write your essay.

4. **Stay focused.** Read the essay question carefully. Jot down a few ideas, then choose the one that looks like the most fun to write about. Stick to that main theme throughout the essay. Essays can help you make your case to admission officials, but don’t go overboard. There will be opportunities elsewhere in the application to list all your achievements.

5. **Put your best foot forward.** Applying online may feel like you’re sending email, but you’re not. Incorrect capitalization or abbreviations like B4 or “thanx” are not appropriate for a formal document. Make sure your essay represents the best of you.

6. **Write and rewrite.** Don’t try to knock out a masterpiece on your first try. For your first draft, write anything that comes to mind about your topic. Let it “rest” for a few hours or a few days. When you come back to the draft, look for ways to make it more focused and better written. Are there details that don’t really relate to the topic? Cut them. Do you need another example? Put it in.

7. **Get a second opinion.** When you’ve rewritten the essay to your satisfaction, find someone who can give you advice on how to make it even better. Choose a person you respect and who knows something about writing. Ask them to tell you what they like best about your essay and what you can do to improve it.

8. **Keep an open mind.** Criticism can be tough to hear, but try to listen with an open mind. You don’t have to make every change suggested. After all, it’s your essay and no one else’s, but you should seriously consider each suggestion.

9. **Proofread, proofread, proofread.** Little errors creep in throughout the writing and editing process. Before you submit your essay, make sure to proofread. Try reading your essay aloud or having someone else read it to you. Another strategy is to read the essay backward, from the last sentence to the first. Errors your eye may have previously skipped over will jump out at you.

10. **Don’t expect too much from an essay.** The application essay is important, but admission officers look at the whole package; your academics, extracurricular activities, standardized tests, and other factors. Make your essay as well-written as you can, but don’t put so much pressure on yourself that the rest of the application fades in importance.
# STANDARDIZED TESTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAT Exam Dates 2019-20</th>
<th>ACT Test Dates 2019-20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEST DATE</strong></td>
<td><strong>TEST DATE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1, 2019</td>
<td>June 8, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 24, 2019</td>
<td>September 14, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 5, 2019</td>
<td>October 26, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2, 2019</td>
<td>December 14, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 7, 2019</td>
<td>February 8, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 14, 2020 (SAT I Only)</td>
<td>April 6, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 6, 2020</td>
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Please refer to the links below for registration information and deadlines:
[https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register)

## SAT vs. ACT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>ACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why Take It</strong></td>
<td>Colleges use SAT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Test Structure** | • Reading  
• Writing & Language  
• Math  
• Essay (Optional) | • English  
• Math  
• Reading  
• Science Reasoning  
• Essay (Optional) |
| **Length** | • 3 hr. (without essay)  
• 3 hr. 50 min. (with essay) | • 2 hr. 55 min. (without essay)  
• 3 hr. 40 min. (with essay) |
| **Reading** | 5 reading passages | 4 reading passages |
| **Science** | None | 1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge) |
| **Math** | Covers:  
• Arithmetic  
• Algebra 1 & 2  
• Geometry, Trig, & Data Analysis | Covers:  
• Arithmetic  
• Algebra 1 & 2  
• Geometry & Trig |
| **Calculator Policy** | Some math questions don't allow you to use a calculator | You can use a calculator on all math questions |
| **Essays** | Optional; the essay will test our comprehension of a source text | Optional: the essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues |
| **How It’s Scored** | Scored on a scale of 400-1600 | Scored on a scale of 1-36 |
IMPORTANT LINKS

NCAA Website Registration Checklist:

Division I Academic Requirements and Test Scores:

Division II Academic Requirements and Test Scores:

SUNY Admissions Information Summary and Division Sports – 2018:
https://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/summary-sheets/Admissions_qf_stateop.pdf

SUNY Community College Admissions Information Summary and Division Sports – 2018:
https://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/summary-sheets/Admissions_qf_cc.pdf

SUNY Honors Programs Information Summary – 2018:
https://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/summary-sheets/honors_programs.pdf

CollegeBoard CSS Profile – 2019-20:

FAFSA At A Glance – 2019-20:

Myths About Financial Aid:
NEW YORK COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID AWARENESS NETWORK

The New York higher education community provides statewide support to students and families on “how to apply” and “how to pay for college.” Students and parents should explore all financial aid options. There are many sources of financial aid assistance available to help cover the costs of a college education.

New York’s “College Financial Aid Awareness Network” is a cooperative project of the New York State Financial Aid Administrator’s Association (NYSFAAAA) and the New York Higher Education Services Corporation (NYSHESC).

www.HESC.ny.gov

  College and Career Planning and Financial Aid Information your students need:
  1. 18 student financial aid programs
  2. How to complete the FAFSA information
  3. Tools and resources for each step toward college, including College Fair Calendar

www.pin.ed.gov

  Federal site where applicants and their parent(s) can apply for a federal pin number. This serves as an electronic signature and can be used to sign application, in addition to all of the functions listed above. It can also be used to sign legally binding documents, such as a federal promissory note. The pin number should be applied for prior to filing the FAFSA application so applicants and parents can sign electronically.

www.fafsa.ed.gov

  Federal site for filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, a form required by virtually all colleges and universities. The site is available after October 1 for upcoming award year. Applicants can file initial application, renewal application (for future years), make corrections, add or delete colleges to receive applications, and check on filing status.

www.studentaid.ed.gov

  The federal government’s official website which has a great deal of information for college bound students and their parents.

www.finaid.org

  Probably the best and most inclusive financial aid website which provides various financial aid calculators (including family contribution calculators), loan repayment calculators, and savings calculators. Has information on federal and state aid programs, savings, plans, and answers frequently asked questions about topics, such as the family contribution formula, divorce, changes in circumstance, and more. Use their site map as a guide to the information available. To calculate EFC, click “calculations” from home page, then select “Estimated Family Contribution and Financial Aid Calculator”. Use defaults that pop up.

www.mappingyourfuture.org

  A national site where students undergo entrance counseling prior to loan borrowing. It includes information on planning for a career, selecting a college, and financial aid.

www.fastweb.com

  Free scholarships search with over 600,000 private scholarships in its database.

www.scholarships.com

  Free college scholarships and financial aid search.

www.ncaa.org

  Information for college bound student athletes and parents about NCAA regulations (including eligibility requirements), statistics, and link to member conferences and associations.
GUIDE TO COLLEGES FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

To be successful in the quest for “the right” college, students and their parents must work together and carefully explore all the options.

A wide variety of options in post-secondary education are offered to students with learning disabilities. Generally, programs are one of two different types: those that offer separate admissions and standards for the students with learning disabilities and those that do not.

1. **Separate admissions and standards** may be offered to students with learning disabilities. The goal of special programs is to teach students with learning disabilities to manage their disabilities through special support services so that they may eventually function successfully in typical college programs. Some classes may be specifically for students with learning disabilities. These colleges place emphasis on developing study habits and skills based on individual strengths and learning styles. Normally an LD specialist in a learning lab works with students in individual or small group sessions.

2. **No special admissions policies** for students with learning disabilities are followed. However, students with learning disabilities able to meet college standards are provided with various modifications to traditional classroom learning environments, as well as on campus remedial and tutorial help so that they may adjust to college academic work.

Students with learning disabilities should begin college planning by the end of 11th grade. Students with disabilities should make certain to review the required regulation if they are thinking of taking college entrance examinations (SAT Reasoning Tests, ACT, SAT Subject Tests) under a non-standard administration. Please see your school counselor for assistance.

Start early to accumulate necessary evaluations and test results that you will need to do informed planning for college. Contact your high school counselor to discuss the following records:

- Written evaluations from Special Education teachers
- Recommendations from General Education teachers
- Test results - SAT, ACT, WAIS
- Medical reports relevant to your learning disability
- Counselor recommendations for college planning
- High School transcripts

Research programs of study. Email or call the Students with Disabilities Service Office directly. Call to arrange an appointment to discuss the program. When a face-to-face meeting is not possible, you will need to telephone or email a letter to get answers to some relevant questions.

**WHAT TO ASK:**

- Is there a special program for students with learning disabilities?
- How many full-time students with learning disabilities are enrolled in the program?
- Is there a brochure or written description of the program available?
- Do students with learning disabilities in special programs take typical college courses?
- Are special courses required of students with learning disabilities? Do they carry college credit? Can credit be used toward graduation?
- Are there additional tuition or fee requirements for students with learning disabilities?
- Are there special admission procedures for students with learning disabilities?

It is strongly recommended that you visit each school you are interested in, if possible. Call to arrange a campus visit and a personal interview.
APPLICATION PROCESS FOR MILITARY ACADEMIES

1. See your counselor during early spring of your junior year to discuss criteria for eligibility and steps to follow. Starting early is essential to obtaining an appointment to an academy.

2. Be sure to attend a meeting with appropriate military representatives who periodically visit the guidance office.

3. Determine whether you meet the scholastic and physical qualifications, and requirements of the specific military academy to which you wish to apply. Have a good knowledge of the responsibilities and duties involved upon admission and in the future.

4. Write a letter requesting a pre-candidate questionnaire in the spring of your junior year. You need a Social Security number to initiate this file.

5. In the spring of your junior year, apply for a nomination from one or more of the government officials listed. You must obtain this nomination to compete for admission to all service academies except the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. Apply to all forces for which you are eligible.

6. Take the SAT or ACT and have official copies of your scores sent to the specific academy.

7. Obtain letters of recommendation from teachers and your counselor.

8. Take the qualifying medical exam.

9. Take the Physical Aptitude Test, which assesses strength, agility, flexibility, and endurance. It is recommended that you train for this test prior to taking it.

ADDRESSES FOR MILITARY ACADEMIES

United States Military Academy – West Point
USMA West Point, NY 10996-1796
Director, Candidate Guidance (Code 304)

United States Naval Academy
Annapolis, MD 21402-5018

United States Air Force Academy
Admissions Office, HQ USAFA/RRS
USAF Academy
Colorado Springs, CO 80840-5651

United States Coast Guard Academy
Application for Appointment as Cadet, U.S. Coast Guard (CG-4151)
Director of Admissions, United States Coast Guard Academy
New London, CT 06320
(no congressional nominations required – based solely on national competition)

United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point
Admission Office, United States Merchant Marine Academy
Kings Point, NY 11024
(Does not accept Presidential or Vice Presidential nominations. Must be nominated by a Congressman or other official from your geographic area)
RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS (ROTC) SCHOLARSHIPS

The Army, Air Force, and Navy-Marine Corps offer financial assistance to qualified men and women in the form of ROTC scholarships through some colleges and universities. The awards are based on a competitive selection process in which consideration is given to such factors as high school class standing, college entrance examinations, extra-curricular activities, and leadership qualities.

These four-year ROTC scholarships provide for full college tuition plus all instructional fees, including textbooks.

You return the ROTC investment (in your future) by agreeing to serve four years on active duty, followed by four years of service in the Reserves.

Students may make application to all three ROTC scholarship programs, but may accept one of these scholarships. The scholarship award is based on merit, not on financial need.

Interested students should begin the application process in the spring of their junior year. The deadline for applying is December of the senior year. To apply for an ROTC scholarship, you may request an application from:

**ARMY**

Department of the Army  
Army ROTC Scholarship  
Fort Monroe, VA 23651-5238

**AIR FORCE**

HQAFROTC  
Recruiting Division  
Maxwell Air Force Base, AL 36112-6633

**NAVY-MARINES**

NROTC-NRD New York  
1975 Hempstead Turnpike  
East Meadow, NY 11554
THE ARMED SERVICES

Military life has changed a great deal since the Department of Defense announced the all-volunteer force. By Congressional legislation passed in 1971, the military staffing budget has been greatly increased to raise military pay and to provide more benefits to service personnel. The Defense Department also has established Project Volunteer, a program to end reliance on the draft by improving the conditions of military life. Housing allowances have been raised, off-base military housing and health care facilities are being improved, and scholarships have been increased.

SELECTIVE SERVICE REGISTRATION

Proclamation 4771 of the Military Selective Service Act, Dated July 21, 1980, states that all males who are citizens of the United States must register within 30 days of their 18th birth date.

You can register at any U.S. Post Office simply by filling out a Selective Service Registration form. Personal identification, such as driver’s license or birth certificate, is required.

If you have any questions, call (708) 688-6888 or write: Selective Service National Headquarters, Registration Information Bureau, Washington, DC 20435.

ARMY OPPORTUNITIES

In today’s Army, there are literally hundreds of skills programs from which to choose. If you enlist under the Delayed Entry Program, you can do the choosing. You may have to wait for an opening in the training of your choice, but, if you qualify, the Army will guarantee your choice up to twelve months in advance.

To help meet college costs, the Army introduced the Army College Fund. Depending on how long you serve and the specialty you qualify for, you can accumulate funds to be used for college expenses after you leave the Army.

Also, if you are interested in the Army, but do not want to spend the next few years away, the Army Reserve might be of interest to you. As a Reservist, you serve sixteen hours a month (usually a weekend) with a Reserve Unit near home, and participate in two weeks of training at an Army post each year. When you join, you choose a skill, depending on your qualifications and openings in your local unit. Your training as a Reservist is the same as that given to a full-time soldier. Ask your Army Recruiter about other new programs that might be available.

NAVY OPPORTUNITIES

Today’s Navy is more complex and sophisticated than ever before. It is a job that requires high levels of capability in many different environments: on the sea, under the sea, and at shore bases all over the world.

A number of Navy programs provide opportunities for continuing a formal education while in the service. The Office of Educational Credit and Credentials of the American Council on Education regularly reviews and evaluates Navy training and experience. It makes recommendations to colleges and universities for awarding college credits for many Navy courses and ratings. Navy personnel can also participate in a new educational assistance program with the government, one that can provide funds for future education.

AIR FORCE OPPORTUNITIES

The Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) now offers associate degrees in more than 80 technical specialties. The completion of Air Force basic training and a technical training course qualifies you for credits that can be applied toward this degree. To complete your degree requirements, you must also register for off-duty education courses. When you do, the Air Force pays 75% of your tuition.

Two other programs offered are the Air Force Guaranteed Training Enlistment Program (GTEP) and the Aptitude Index (AI) Program. The GTEP offers you training at a specific technical school or on-the-job training in the specific Air Force skill following basic training. On the other hand, the AI Program guarantees you training in one of the four major Air Force Aptitude Indexes: mechanical, administrative, general, or electronics. When you enter the Air Force under the AI Program, you receive your assignment during basic training.
MARINE CORPS OPPORTUNITIES

The Marine Corps has more than 300 jobs in 35 occupational fields; from aviation, data communications and electronics, to field artillery, administration, and infantry. You may also qualify for special assignments, such as embassy and sea duty.

There are more than 200 basic and 300 advanced schools in the Marine Corps. Some jobs offer formal instruction at these schools, while others give you on-the-job training. There are also financial programs to help you continue your college education. For example, the Corps will help you save money through the Veterans’ Educational Assistance Program. You can accumulate funds to be used for college in this manner.