



Tewksbury Memorial High School's College Planning Guide

Website: COMMON APP

Login: _____

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Website: NAVIANCE

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Website: FAFSA

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Website: THE COLLEGE BOARD

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Website: MEFA Pathways

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Civil Rights Notification

No person shall be excluded or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, native language (or language other than English), sexual orientation, homelessness, or disability.

Any questions should be directed to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, 139 Pleasant Street, Tewksbury MA, 01876, 978-640-7800.

FAST FORWARD TO THE FALL

AUGUST	Common App Kickoff: A great opportunity for students to begin the Common Application with the assistance of the Guidance staff.
SEPTEMBER	Presentations for seniors and their parents to explain the college application process and other post-graduate planning activities.
SEPT.-OCT.	Individual senior meetings begin: Seniors should make appointments with their school counselors to discuss the steps necessary to begin planning for life after high school. Admission representatives from local colleges and universities visit TMHS to meet with interested juniors and seniors and answer questions about their school. Students must sign up in Naviance ahead of time to attend these sessions.
OCTOBER:	Counselors conduct a Resume Writing Workshop and another Common Application Workshop during Open House Families can begin completing the FAFSA

EARLY ACTION DEADLINES

October 15
November 1
November 15
December 1

Students intending to apply Early Action or Early Decision must meet with their school counselors and request their letters of recommendation before the end of September.

JUNIOR YEAR COLLEGE CHECKLIST

- ❑ Start using the college search tools in Naviance to research colleges that you may want to apply to using criteria that are important to you (e.g., size, location, cost).
- ❑ As part of your research, pay close attention to the admission requirements of the schools you are interested in. Are you a strong candidate? What are the chances that you will be admitted? We recommend that you create a list that includes “reach” schools, “probable” schools and “safety” schools.
- ❑ Understand the difference between Early Action/Early Decision and Regular Decision. Early Action/Early Decision deadlines occur in October/early November and push the entire application process forward. If you are applying early, you must meet with your counselor by the end of September.
- ❑ Decide if you want to take the SAT/ACT. While many schools remain test optional, some schools require standardized test results as part of their application. Do your research early so you can sign up in the spring to take one or both exams.
- ❑ Having developed an initial college list through Naviance, begin visiting colleges you are interested in. Tour the campus. Eat in the cafeteria and talk to students who go to school there. Visit when school is in session to get a feel for the place. April vacation is a great time to do this.
- ❑ Consider using the summer to begin writing your college essay. (See page 9 for tips on writing your essay.) The college essay prompts will be posted in the Google Classroom for your class. They are usually available in late spring.
- ❑ Start filling out the Getting To Know You questionnaire in the Google Classroom. Your counselor relies heavily on this information to write you a thorough and accurate letter of recommendation. We recommend you do this at the END of your junior year or over the summer as we need the most up-to-date information possible.
- ❑ Start thinking about which teachers you are going to ask to write your letters of recommendation.
- ❑ If you are planning to apply Early Action or Early Decision, sign up for the Resume-Writing Workshop at TMHS in the spring and begin working on your resume. (A sample resume is included on page 15.)
- ❑ Make sure that the email you have listed in Naviance is one you check regularly. Counselors will be communicating important information to you via email.

SENIOR YEAR COLLEGE CHECKLIST

- Continue using Naviance to research colleges that fit the criteria you are looking for (e.g., size, location, academic majors). Make a list of the ones you are interested in applying to.
- As part of your research, pay close attention to the admission requirements of the schools you are interested in. Are you a strong candidate? What are the chances that you will be admitted? We recommend that you create a list that includes “reach” schools, “probable” schools and “safety” schools, as well as a mix of public and private.
- WRITE DOWN ALL APPLICATION DEADLINES. You are responsible for sending your materials on time.**
- If you have not already done so, arrange a college visit. Tour the campus. Ask questions. Eat in the cafeteria. Go when school is in session to get a feel for the place.
- If you are sending standardized test scores, log in to your College Board or ACT account and send your scores to the colleges that require them. **YOU are responsible for sending your scores to the colleges you apply to.** Talk with your counselor about which schools you should send them to, if applicable.
- Submit your completed Getting To Know You questionnaire to your counselor at least two weeks before your application deadline(s).
- Complete your resume and give a copy to your counselor and the teachers writing your letters.
- Send requests through Naviance to the teachers who have agreed to write your letters of recommendation.
- Begin filling out the Common Application. This is time consuming. Do not try to do it all in one night or you will make mistakes. Do a little bit each day and save your progress along the way. If you have any questions, email your counselor or come to Guidance ASAP.
- If your school does not use the Common Application, you need to fill out the application on that school’s web site.
- Continue writing your college essay. When you’re finished, show it to an English teacher. Ask for honest feedback and be willing to re-write it, if necessary.
- If you think you might want to play sports in college, see Mr. Harne to discuss NCAA eligibility. There is a form online you need to fill out.
- Feeling overwhelmed? Take a deep breath. You can do this. See your counselor if you need to talk.
- Don’t forget to study and keep up with your classes. Senior year grades will be mailed to the colleges you have applied to.

NAVIGATING THE COMMON APPLICATION

1. Many schools use the Common App, but not all. Search for the colleges you are interested in applying to and add them to your Dashboard. If any of the schools you want to apply to don't use the Common App, you'll need to submit a separate application directly with them.

2. Sign the FERPA. Select one of the colleges in your My Colleges list and read the FERPA Release Authorization. We recommend you sign the FERPA waiver, which allows your counselor to release all requested records without your review. Waiving your right to review your records lets colleges know that you do not intend to read your recommendations, which helps reassure colleges that the letters are candid and truthful.

3. Fill out application questions slowly and deliberately. "Relevant questions will pop up based on your answers to previous questions," says Katherine Cohen, founder of New York-based college admissions consultancy IvyWise. For instance, once you select your intended major or program, a certain essay prompt might appear. "If you plan to apply to the engineering department, make sure you're not accidentally answering the college of arts and sciences prompt," says Cohen.

4. Prepare longer answers ahead of time. For the activities section, personal statement and any writing supplements, you're best off writing and editing offline. When it comes to the Activities section, use varied, powerful action verbs and make the most of the space. "Many times students don't give themselves enough credit when filling out the activities section. Make sure to provide detailed descriptions about the activities you participated in, any leadership positions, and how you made an impact," says Cohen.

5. The personal statement is worth spending time on. Oftentimes, the essay is the only opportunity colleges have to hear your voice. While a second or third set of eyes can be helpful in focusing and fine-tuning your essay, "I advise students not to allow too many significant others to tamper with their essays," says Chat Leonard, Director of College Counseling at St. Louis' Metro Academic & Classical High School. "Colleges want to read essays that sound like a 17 or 18 year old voice. Too often the voice in the essay sounds too mature. Keep the voice fresh, keep it yours and own it!"

6. List your most impressive classes and activities first. Instead of entering classes and extracurriculars in the order you attend them each day, put the most impressive and relevant ones up top. You have 10 spaces, but “colleges want to see sustained, deep involvement in your extracurricular activities, so don’t include small, one-off activities that didn’t mean much to you,” says Cohen.

7. Report your highest test scores where you can. The Common App will ask which test scores you *wish* to report, giving you the freedom to put your best foot forward and choose your best scores. But remember that each school has different requirements that you need to meet — many colleges are test optional, some want all your scores, and some superscore multiple scores. Since you submit applications one at a time, edit the testing page each time so it satisfies the requirement of the respective college while shedding the best light on your scores. Don’t forget to send official score reports to colleges, too.

8. Review, pay and submit. Submitting your application is a three-step process. First, review the application. Be on the lookout for things like formatting issues on the essay or cut-off descriptions in the extracurricular section. Next, pay the application fee, either with a credit card, bank account routing numbers or a fee waiver. Finally, sign the affirmation and submit. You’ll see a green check that confirms your application has been submitted, but you should also check your dashboard.

9. Submit supplements separately from the application. If your school asks for a writing or arts supplement, you’ll submit it after you’ve submitted your application materials.

THE COLLEGE ADMISSION ESSAY

Many colleges require students to write an essay as part of the application for admission. This essay will often be a factor in the admissions decision along with your transcript, standardized test scores, letters of recommendation, interview, and anything else you submit as part of your application. MEFA would like to offer the following tips for you to consider when planning and writing your essay:

1. Focus the essay on you, not on someone else. The college wants to use it to help learn more about you, not one of your friends or one of your relatives. You're the one applying for admissions. Use the essay to tell them something about the person behind the grades and test scores.
2. Content is as important as composition. Make it interesting and informative. Every year many very well-written, excruciatingly boring essays are submitted.
3. Don't be afraid to avoid the obvious approach to a suggested essay topic. Independent thinkers are often appreciated by the admissions reader.
4. Don't waste the essay writing about information available to admissions in other parts of your application. They'll have your grades and activities list. Write about something they obviously don't know about you.
5. Stay within the required length. A college admissions officer probably has hundreds of essays to read from applicants. Respect their time they've allotted to you and get the point of your essay across within the guidelines.
6. If you think about it, the essay is the only part of the application process where you exert full control. Even if the topic is assigned by the college, you have full reign on how you wish to approach it. Contemplate your approach in-depth before beginning to write.
7. Don't use twenty words when five will suffice to make your point.
8. The key to an effective essay is to focus on the MESSAGE you wish to tell the reader, not the STORY. Frequently, students get so involved telling a detailed story that the important message gets buried.
9. Don't use generic or cliché statements that most other students could have also used. Make the statements personal and specific about you.
10. Make sure your essay is YOUR work. Feel free to get feedback from parents, teachers, friends, and counselors, but make it your essay. When you have finished with it, you should be the one who is most proud of it.

COLLEGE VOCABULARY GUIDE

ACT (American College Testing Program): This is a predominant testing program in the Midwest and some parts of the South. Most colleges will accept either the ACT, SAT, or both. Students should check with the colleges they are applying to.

AP Test (Advanced Placement): A test for students who have completed college level work in a particular subject while in high school. Many colleges will grant college credit and/or advanced standing to students who score well.

Associate's Degree: The degree awarded after the successful completion of a two-year program of study at a college or university.

Bachelor's Degree: The degree awarded after the successful completion of a four-year program of study at a college or university.

Community/Junior College: A college offering a two-year program rather than a four-year program. Community colleges usually offer vocational programs as well as the first two years of many four-year programs.

Early Action: A plan where students apply to a college/university in the early fall of their senior year and notification of acceptance is sent in mid-December. The applicant is not committed to attend this institution.

Early Decision: A plan where students apply to a college/university in the early fall of their senior year and notification of acceptance is sent in mid-December. If accepted, a commitment-to-attend is usually required along with the withdrawal of all other applications.

Liberal Arts: The study of the humanities, history, foreign languages, social sciences, mathematics, and natural sciences. A liberal arts education stresses the development of general knowledge and reasoning ability.

Rolling Admission: Admission decisions are made on a continuous basis throughout the year. Notification of acceptance is usually sent within 3-4 weeks.

SAT I: Reasoning Test: A test of verbal and mathematical skills designed to predict your likelihood of success during freshman year of college. It seeks to measure aptitude. A few colleges require SAT I scores.

SAT II: Subject Test: This is a more specific test of your knowledge in a particular subject. Very few colleges require SAT Subject test scores, but some highly competitive schools do. Check the college's admission Web page to determine if you need to take one.

Wait List: A response that a student's application is acceptable but the limit of accepted students has already been reached. Wait-listed students are admitted after May 1 if space is available.

FINANCIAL AID

The purpose of financial aid is to help every qualified student pay for a higher education. Students may apply for financial aid from the federal government and also from the college or university to which they are applying. There are two major categories of financial aid: (1) aid that does NOT need to be repaid and (2) aid that does need to be repaid.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

All colleges/universities require the FAFSA. This is the financial aid application for the federal government. This application may be filled out after October 1 of the student's senior year. The application is available online (www.fafsa.gov). Both students and parents must apply for a pin number. After receiving a pin number through email, the FAFSA may be filled out. One to six weeks after the application is submitted the student will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR will inform the student his/her Expected Family Contribution (EFC). This is the amount that a student's family would be expected to contribute the following year. This form must be filled out each year a student is in college.

CSS Profile

Most private schools and scholarships require the CSS Profile and some schools will also require their own institutional form. This form may be filled out as early as the fall of senior year. Information on the CSS Profile is available at www.profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp.

Institutional Form

Some schools may require their own financial aid form. If they do, this form may be part of the school's application, or may be found on the CSS Profile, or might be mailed to a student after an application is submitted.

NCAA RULES AND REGULATIONS

Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse if you anticipate playing college sports at the Division I or II level; forms are available online at <http://www.eligibilitycenter.org>. After registering with NCAA Clearinghouse, provide your ID# to Mr. Dave Harne in Guidance so he can send in your transcript.

Contact college coaches by phone or e-mail at any time, but know that they cannot call you prior to July 1 after your junior year. Consider attending camps at colleges you may be interested in attending and let the coaches know that you will be participating;

Coaches are allowed to:

- Send you athletic or sports camp brochures, NCAA Educational Information and Questionnaires. A coach can also accept phone calls from you as long as they are at your expense but if you leave a message on an answering service the coach is NOT ALLOWED TO CALL YOU BACK.

Coaches are NOT allowed to:

- Call you on the phone.
- Send you any written recruiting information.

NCAA Recruiting Guidelines, Unofficial Visits:

- You can make [unofficial visits](#) to a college campus.
- It is also permissible for you to receive a maximum of three complimentary tickets to a college sporting event.
- You can talk with college coaches but this must be on campus.

Junior year from July 1

A college coach is permitted to contact you in person off the college campus only on or after July 1st when you have completed your junior year of high school. If the coach meets with you or your parents and says anything to you or them then this is considered a contact. Anything more than a very basic hello is a contact. College coaches are permitted to make one telephone call each week to you or your parents. You can call the coach as often as you wish.

Junior year from September 1

College coaches are allowed to send you information about their athletic program and about their school. This can include: media guides, schedule cards, personalized letters, photocopies of newspaper clippings and official university admissions and academic publications. The college coach will be allowed to answer your emails and send emails to you as well.

Senior year

You can make up to five official expense-paid visits to college campuses. The visit to the campus cannot be longer than 48 hours in duration. You are not allowed to have an official visit until after your first day of classes of your senior year.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR MASSACHUSETTS STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

English	4 courses = 1 each academic year
Math	4 courses = Course work should include: Algebra I & II, Geometry or Trigonometry or comparable course work. **Math course in senior year
Science	3 courses = Course work from: Natural Science, Physical Science or Technology / Engineering. Three courses must have laboratory work.
Social Studies	2 courses = 1 must be a U.S. History course
World Languages	2 courses in a single language
Electives	2 courses = from the above subjects or from the arts & humanities or computer sciences

- Students applying to competitive programs or colleges should maintain a rigorous schedule which would include additional coursework in world languages, math and science.
- The required minimum weighted high school GPA is 3.0 for the four-year public campuses. If an applicant's GPA falls below the required minimum, the sliding scale below will apply when considering students for admission.

Freshmen Applicants to UMASS	
Weighted High School GPA	Combined SAT (ACT) Score
2.51-2.99	950 (20)
2.41-2.50	990 (21)
2.31-2.40	1030 (22)
2.21-2.30	1070 (23)
2.11-2.20	1110 (24)
2.00-2.10	1150 (25)

Freshmen Applicants to State Colleges	
Weighted High School GPA	Combined SAT (ACT) Score
2.51-2.99	920 (19)
2.41-2.50	960 (20)
2.31-2.40	1000 (21)
2.21-2.30	1040 (22)
2.11-2.20	1080 (23)
2.00-2.10	1120 (24)

THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

DO:

- Research colleges before you visit. Know each school's reputation.
- Call ahead to make an appointment.
- Bring a list of questions to your interview.
- Come prepared to answer challenging questions like:
 - Why are you interested in our college or university?
 - What would you contribute as a student here?
 - What has been your greatest challenge and how did you overcome it?
- Be prepared to discuss your academic qualifications, courses you have taken and any difficulties encountered.
- Bring samples of writing, newspaper articles, clippings or other items that display your talent.
- Look your best and dress professionally.
- Bring a copy of your transcript.

DON'T:

- Bring coffee or anything to eat or drink.
- Slouch or mumble.
- Forget or disregard your appointment. Call to reschedule if you cannot make your interview.
- Ask questions that can be answered by looking at the school's Web site.
- Look at or use your cell phone. Keep it turned off and out of sight.

QUESTIONS TO ASK PROSPECTIVE COLLEGES:

- What is the average class size freshman year?
- Are certain courses difficult to get into?
- What type of academic advising is provided?
- Do you give credit for AP courses? If so, what score is required to receive credit?
- Is housing guaranteed for all 4 years?
- What kind of off-campus housing is available?
- How are students assigned to on-campus housing?
- What kind of meal plans are available?
- What are the eligibility requirements to study abroad (assuming they have study abroad programs)?
- Can students have cars on campus?
- Do you offer internships? Are there paid positions available?
- What career services are available?
- What percentage of graduates go directly into the work force? Graduate school?

SAMPLE RESUME

Laura Smith

6 Pine Street, Tewksbury, MA 01876

978-640-5555

l.smith347@gmail.com

Objective

To earn a bachelor's degree in journalism so that I can work at a daily newspaper covering local politics.

Education

Tewksbury Memorial High School, Class of 2020

Gold Card recipient for maintaining an A average in all classes, all terms, 2019

Awards/Honors

First place in Veterans' Day essay-writing contest for the Town of Tewksbury, 2018

Member, National Honor Society, 2018-19

Work Experience

Ice cream scooper, J.P. Licks, Burlington, MA

June 2019-Sept. 2019

- Served ice cream to customers
- Worked the cash register
- Kept store clean during operating hours

Sales associate, Target, Wilmington, MA

January 2019-June 2019

- Re-stocked clothes from the dressing rooms
- Handled returns at the customer service counter

Volunteer Work

Zero Waste Day

November 2018, 2019

- Collected and organized donated items during the town's 4-hour drop-off event
- Made signs to publicize the event and posted them around town

Lazarus House

June 2016-present

- Every month I spend three hours on a Saturday sorting and pricing donated items for sale at their thrift store, which raises money for St. Mary's Church

Extracurricular Activities

Member of the TMHS Tennis Team

2017, 2018

- Practiced every day in the spring for 3 hours after school
- Placed second at the state championship meet in 2018

President, Drama Guild

2019

- Organized fund-raising events to support our school's theater productions
- Served as the club ambassador during Open House and Freshman Orientation

Secretary, Student Council

2019-2020

- Attended weekly Student Council meetings and took notes on action items and discussions
- Participated in planning all school wide spirit events, including Homecoming and the Pep Rally

