

DEXTER SOUTHFIELD

CLASS OF 2016

COLLEGE HANDBOOK

A Guide to the College Search and Application Process

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INTRODUCTION

When a student searches for and applies to a college or a university, he or she matures and gains a clearer sense of self. Even as Dexter Southfield students go through many of the same experiences – some may even apply to the same institutions – each takes one’s own steps. Also, even though Dexter Southfield has a carefully designed program to show each student a variety of options, the engagement in the process depends on the student. The people at colleges and universities who read application folders value each student’s achievements, potential, attitudes, interests, and ideals. Therefore, it is critical that the student thoughtfully present one’s self.

Dexter Southfield is available to help students at each step and to provide information, reminders about deadlines, sample forms, suggestions about recommendations and essays, and counseling. Teachers, advisers, counselors, and parents also stand as sounding boards for you, the student, to hear your ideas articulated. Sometimes “bouncing an idea off” someone else is the best way for you to discover whether or not the idea is a good one – or whether you really believe it. Given all this help, the student chooses to act on this information.

In order to make decisions well and to lead the process to a satisfactory set of options, you should:

- begin with an honest understanding of your talents and interests;
- conduct thorough research of a number of colleges and universities;
- present yourself clearly in writing and speaking to admission officers;
- avoid being influenced by prejudice and by opinions that do not suit your needs;
- produce a clearly articulated set of applications that reflect your enthusiasm for learning, report on your achievement, and point toward your future contributions.

Some students in the second semester of Class Eleven may find they have already formed clear ideas about where they may want to spend four years. Other students may not have thought yet about life after Dexter Southfield. Regardless of where you stand on this spectrum, the following information will help guide you through the college search and application process.

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COLLEGE ADMISSION CALENDAR

Class Eleven

September-October

- College night for Class Eleven parents. This meeting provides an overview of the college research and application process.
- PSAT
- College reps visit DX-SF. Juniors may attend during study hall with permission of College Office.

December-January

- Students' and parents' questionnaires due
- At least two individual student meetings and one together with parents are expected between January and the first week of June
- January SAT Reasoning Test – required of our students
- Introduction to the process for Class Eleven
- Class Eleven college night for students and parents

February

- Student makes list of campuses to visit during long weekend and spring break
- Alternate years: Meeting for those interested in athletic recruiting process
- Long weekend: visit one or two campuses if possible
- Begin making contact with leaders of special programs, professors, or coaches
- ACT (optional)
- Parents begin meeting with child's college counselor

March

- Spring vacation: a handful of campus visits
- Create tentative, long list of colleges in Naviance
- SAT Reasoning Test – required of students who could not take the January test

April

- Student meeting with college counselor
- ACT (optional)
- BISCCA College Fair at Milton Academy. Students required to attend; parents welcome.
- Boston National College Fair, Boston Convention & Exhibition Ctr. (optional)

May

- SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests
- AP examinations
- Confirm application requirements for all colleges on list
- Save best essays
- Ask two teachers to write letters of recommendation. Enter their names in Naviance.

June

- SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests
- ACT (optional)
- Inquire about meetings with leaders of special college programs, professors, or coaches

July-August

- Begin Common Application. Write draft of personal statement (essay). **Due on the first day back at school**
- Campus visits and interviews
- Register for fall ACT and/or SAT Reasoning/Subject Tests as needed
- Update college list in Naviance.

Class Twelve

September

- ACT (optional)
- Meet in the college office to discuss application drafts and essays
- Seek additional help in revising essays
- Create Short List
- Confirm letter writers or choose new writers
- In Naviance, sign up to meet with visitors from colleges and universities as appropriate
- If applying early, confirm strategy and schedule

October

- SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests as needed (last date available for many Early plans). Request score reports.
- Register for CSS Profile, if required by colleges
- Sign-up to meet visitors from colleges and universities
- Double check all application requirements and deadlines
- Columbus Day weekend: campus visits if necessary
- ACT as needed
- Complete any early applications
- Work on regular applications
- Marking Period 1 grades sent to Early schools

November

- November 1 and 15: most Early Decision I and Early Action applications due
- November 1: CSS Profile Financial Aid forms due for early applicants
- Boston National Performing & Visual Arts Fair
- SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests as needed. Request score reports.
- Veterans' Day holiday: finish any visits
- Expect to use some of Thanksgiving break for applications

December

- Final List due; update Naviance
- SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests as needed. Request score reports.
- ACT as needed
- Mid-late December: Early application(s) notification

January-March

- Most Regular Action applications due
- January 1: submit FAFSA as soon as possible after this date
- First semester grades and Mid-Year Report sent to colleges
- Keep grades up; submit financial aid documents.

April

- Early April: most admission decision letters received
- Attend hosting programs for accepted students as needed
- Discuss options and any wait-lists
- Notify colleges no longer considered

May

- May 1: universal deadline for responding to accepting institutions. Deposit at **one**.

June

- Final transcripts and Final Reports sent to colleges

July

- Request an AP score report to be sent from the College Board to your college, if applicable.

HOW TO BEGIN: YOUR SELF EVALUATION

Recognizing why you want to go to college will help you select the right institution. Begin with a self-evaluation. You can use a self-assessment survey on web sites such as Collegeboard.com (see your college counselor for other sites) to help discern your academic strengths and find career suggestions. Alternatively, write a paragraph describing yourself, or make a list of your strengths and weaknesses. Include your likes and dislikes.

Look at your academic record.

- Review your grades and teacher comments. Are there trends in your performance that reveal your areas of interest and competence?
- Ask yourself about your study habits. Do you have real intellectual curiosity, undertaking homework or additional projects on your own, or do you have to be pushed to complete assignments?
- Do you work for the satisfaction of learning or just grades?

Ask yourself about your extracurricular activities.

- Are recreational sports or playing on a competitive team important to you?
- What kinds of clubs and organizations would you like to join?
- How important are fraternities and sororities?
- What type of campus atmosphere would make you most comfortable?
- Is school spirit important to you?

Think about how independent you are.

- Do you avoid new situations or seek them out?
- Could you go to a college where you don't know anybody?
- Would you want to come home frequently?
- Picture yourself in a college dormitory, getting to know a roommate, asking questions of a professor, handling your own finances and laundry. What demands will be made on you in college and will you be able to meet them?

Ask yourself about goals.

- What might you want to become?
- If you have not yet decided, what kinds of areas are you interested in exploring?

Talk this over with friends, siblings, parents, and your college counselor. Don't worry if you haven't all the answers right away, but look for opportunities that will clarify your strengths and interests. Plan a challenging college summer experience. (The college office or your advisor has many suggestions for college summer study, trips abroad, and jobs.) Ask adults about their work. Let your college advisor know what you conclude.

The college counselors ask you to submit much of the above information on an autobiographical questionnaire due after your Class Eleven winter holiday break.

HOW TO DECIDE WHICH COLLEGE IS FOR YOU

In deciding which college is for you, you must determine what you are looking for in a college. Consider your choices by the following criteria.

Academic Programs

Your first concern should be the quality of the academic programs at the college. Evaluate the strength of your intended major through the breadth and variety of courses, undergraduate research opportunities, placement of graduates in professional schools, and number of advanced degree recipients (if a university).

Size can be a factor; small colleges may have fewer advanced courses, but have unique programs.

Check the distribution requirements or core curriculum. If you never want to take another math course or foreign language course, your college choices may be more limited than you realize. On the other hand, you may be able to satisfy those requirements by achieving a specific score on Advanced Placement Exams, college placement tests, or SAT Subject Tests.

Undecided About a Major?

Look for the largest possible range of avenues new to you. Find out how many new areas you can explore. Can you change your major several times or must you reapply to a specific program before you can change your major? Can you experiment in a field where your talent may be modest? For example, can you take theater or dance classes or are they reserved for majors only? Examine each college for its independent study programs, semesters abroad, internships, consortium advantages, and cooperative plans; all are part of the total academic offerings.

Type of Institution

Do you want to go to a private or state institution? Costs, degree of diversity of students, range of programs, and amount of administrative control vary considerably. Some of you may wish to attend a specialized school. Some Dexter students have chosen fine arts schools, conservatories, the service academies, or engineering colleges. How do you feel about religiously affiliated schools? Does the school still have close ties to that denomination? How does this affiliation affect the academic and social life of the school?

Colleges and universities are categorized in guidebooks by at least one of the following: liberal arts, major research, comprehensive, regional or national. Know the difference and consider which type of institution is best for you.

Size

While the quality of an institution is not determined by its size, your benefit from it may be. Smaller schools may offer smaller class sizes, more faculty contact, and easier access to intercollegiate athletic teams. Large schools may offer a wider variety of activities, academic programs, and housing options. Don't forget about a consortium – you may be able to get the advantages of a small college while having full access to neighboring colleges or universities.

Location

- Don't let the vision of ivy-covered walls and a rural New England setting subconsciously dominate your decision.
- Consider the value of living in other regions of the country. Remember, you will only live there for four or so years.
- Also consider the cost and ease of travel, and how often you will want to go home.

Competitiveness

There is a college for you. Talk with your counselor about the degree of competitiveness that will provide you with a challenging yet comfortable college environment. The academic rigor of the college depends mostly on how seriously the student body takes its studies and the expectations made by the faculty.

Most college guides categorize colleges as to their “competitiveness,” referring to the degree of selectivity of the school. The degree of difficulty of gaining admission to selective institutions has increased dramatically in the past few years. Even if a parent attended a selective college, that institution’s selectivity of admission probably has risen dramatically in the interim.

Cost

The “sticker price,” cost of tuition, room and board, varies between \$18,000 for state schools and over \$55,000 for many private institutions. You will also have to pay for transportation, fees, and books. You will need spending money. To determine the cost range of institutions you can consider, find the total cost on the colleges’ websites. You should **not** exclude an institution solely because of cost. Scholarships and financial aid are available to students with demonstrated need (need-based) and with specific talents (merit-based).

Hint: Check the college’s Net Price Calculator for an approximation of what you will be expected to pay.

Examples of Annually Published College Guides

Barron’s Profiles of American College with CD-ROMs. Profiles of 1650 colleges/universities including admission requirements, programs and majors, rankings, financial aid, and more.

The Best 366 Colleges. Published by Princeton Review, this is a guidebook that provides subjective evaluations of selective colleges.

Complete Book of Colleges. Published by Princeton Review.

The College Handbook, The Index of College Majors, The College Cost Book. Published annually by the College Board, these volumes include a great deal of data about member colleges. The Handbook is organized by state, while the Index is organized into 350 different major fields of study. Included are the colleges and universities offering each major and the degrees (bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate) available at each institution.

Fiske Guide to Colleges, Edward Fiske. From a former New York Times writer, the Fiske Guide is organized alphabetically by institution and includes “each college’s strongest departments and students’ tips on academic and social-life ratings.”

Insider’s Guide to the Colleges, Yale Daily News Staff. Just what it purports to be – a highly subjective evaluation of colleges compiled from student interviews and questionnaires.

Peterson’s Four-Year Colleges. A directory of information about 2000 colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A COLLEGE VISIT

Visiting the campus may well have the greatest impact in determining which college you choose. The best time to visit is when the college is in session. Juniors are advised to start visiting colleges during their spring break. If this is not possible, you should schedule summer visits. Although you may not see many students, you can at least narrow your potential list so you are more selective when you pay a return visit in the fall. During the summer, colleges are swamped with requests for interviews and tours may be large.

Consult with your college counselors. They may know faculty or coaches you should meet, or remind you to see other nearby institutions you could consider. They can provide names of Dexter graduates who attend the college you are going to visit, and who might be available to show you around or host you.

Several weeks in advance of your trip, call the Admissions Office to schedule a campus tour and inquire whether an on-campus interview is possible. Remember, many schools no longer grant on campus interviews and rely instead on regional alumni interviewers (see The College Interview). Admissions staffs are busy making admissions decisions in February and March and usually do not schedule individual appointments during that time period. If the college is on recess, call and find out what resources are available should you decide to visit.

If you will be applying for financial aid, ask the Admission Office whether you should arrange an appointment in the Financial Aid Office.

In touring the campus, pay special attention to the library, campus bookstore, computer facilities, housing units, and those facilities in the area of your academic and extracurricular interests. Are they in good repair with “state-of-the-art” equipment? Be sure to ask questions of your tour guide. (Is the campus safe? Is housing available for everyone who wants it?)

End your visit at the student union. Have a meal or a snack. Talk with as many people as possible to hear their views of the college. Try not to be influenced by any one person’s attitude, or the weather, or how tired you are at the time, or how difficult it was to find the place. It may be helpful to take pictures and keep a journal of what you liked and didn’t like about each of the schools. After a while, they may all begin to blend together.

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• **Visit classes if the college is in session.**
• When you have narrowed your list, try to spend the night in a dorm on at least
• one of your campus visits. Make arrangements for an overnight visit through the
• Admissions Office or with a student you may know at the college.
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COLLEGE INTERVIEWS

There is less of an emphasis on college interviews so you will need to inquire about the interviewing policy at each school. If the college grants interviews, take advantage of this opportunity and ask how to set one up. Do not, however, interview until the summer after Class Eleven.. The interview policy will probably be one of the following:

1. No interviews – group information sessions only
2. Alumni interviews only – off campus
3. Interviews are optional and informational only
4. Interviews are encouraged or mandatory and do become a part of the student’s application file

The On-campus Interview

- Make definite arrangements for the appointment in writing (by email or letter) or by phone. Before your appointment, read the college catalog carefully. Don’t ask questions answered in the brochures, but feel free to ask for information on anything discussed in them or about areas that interest you. For example, can anyone get into a pre-med major? Are study abroad programs limited?
- If you have submitted your application, be familiar with what you have said and be prepared to expand on any points you have made.
- Help the interviewer find out who you are. Open up and be yourself.
- Talk about positive points; do not be afraid to address your weak points, either. Be honest, but don’t be afraid to brag a little.
- Take time to listen to questions and answer them directly. Don’t worry about silence. Use it to collect your thoughts.
- Don’t criticize your teachers, school or friends.
- While first impressions are never final ones, they are important.

Interview Suggestions– Either at the College or with an Alumnus/a

- Be on time for your appointment; call if you will be delayed.
- Dress appropriately (Dexter Southfield dress code is perfect).
- Shake the interviewer’s hand firmly and maintain eye contact as you talk.
- Take along a copy of your unofficial transcript and a list of your activities with significant involvement; know your SAT Reasoning Test and Subject Tests scores.
- Be informed. Visit the college website or read the catalog before you get there, but be sure to have some questions about areas that interest you.
- Be ready to talk about yourself – your interests, accomplishments and goals. Explain why you are interested in the college.
- *Learn your interviewer’s name and write him or her a thank you note after the interview.

Sample Questions from College Admissions Interviews

- What has been the most positive experience you have had at school? The most negative?
- What is the most significant contribution you’ve made at your school?
- What are some of your goals—personal and career—in the future?
- Tell me about a particular class in which you found yourself most stimulated intellectually.
- What is your reason for participating in athletics (or student government or literary publications, etc.)? Do you expect to continue in these activities at the collegiate level?
- What has been your favorite subject in high school? What might you study in college?
- What books or articles have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking? Have you read deeply into any one field or author?
- How have you spent your summers? Your free time?

WHAT GOES INTO THE APPLICATION

There are several ways you can apply to colleges. Most colleges and universities are recommending that students apply online. The most popular method (either electronic or by paper) is to use the Common Application (if accepted by the college or university) at www.commonapp.org. Always apply via Common Application when it is an option. If you choose to send an electronic copy of your Common Application or any other web-based application, *please print a hard copy for your files since your application will not be available online once the system rolls over to a new class year.*

Using the Common Application as an example, you will have to complete several parts in order to file a complete application.

1. Application for Undergraduate Admission

An online questionnaire leads you through a series of personal and biographical data questions, and personal statements that result in your part of the application. The due date is the date by which you must submit this part of the application. By the way, your name must be identical on each part of the application; computers reflect even the omission of a middle initial. In order to make the best impression, make a photocopy of each application or download a PDF file copy and use it for a rough draft. Since the applications reflect you, your interests and values, how you write, and how you think, completing them will require a great deal of time and energy. Your college counselor should proof your application before you submit it.

2. School Forms

The Common Application includes a Secondary School Report, two Teacher Evaluations, one Mid-Year, and one Final Report form. The School will send copies of these materials to the college once you have applied and checked the “Application Submitted” box in your Naviance account. The Secondary School Report includes your transcript, a college counselor’s recommendation, and a Dexter Southfield profile. The school profile explains the Dexter Southfield curriculum and grading system.

Most colleges require one or more teacher recommendations. Check to see which teachers some colleges require (usually a teacher in your junior or senior year, and sometimes specifically an English or language teacher or your arts instructor, for instance). Choose teachers who know you well; the same teachers will write the recommendations that will go to all of your colleges.

3. Standardized Testing

Unless stated otherwise, you can assume the college **does** require an official SAT or ACT report from the testing agency. See college websites for specific information.

Students may have the option of requesting a full SAT score report or a Reasoning Test by test date (Score Choice). You also have the option of choosing specific Subject Tests, if applicable.

Check college websites. Students who wish to request ACT results must request by test date.

When registering for the SAT or ACT for the final time, you have the option of choosing four colleges to receive your results at no additional cost. Otherwise, to arrange for an official score report to be sent directly to each college from the College Board or ACT, you’ll need to refer to the SAT and ACT websites for details.

4. Optional Information

- Athletic Supplement, if you are a recruited athlete
- Arts Supplement, if you are submitting an arts portfolio or music CD
- Early Decision Agreement, if applicable
- A personal recommendation from an employer, coach, or family friend with unique information about you that is not already included in your application. Be judicious. Sometimes too many recommendations hinder rather than help an applicant’s chances.

THE ROLE OF STANDARDIZED TESTING

Your grades and the rigor of your academic program will remain the two most important parts of your application. However, standardized test scores also stand out because they give an office of admission a set of objective indicators for measuring your academic potential as well as your mastery of some basic skills. Although there is a growing number of colleges and universities which do not require students to submit **SAT** or **ACT** scores (see www.fairtest.org), most selection committees argue that the tests can be used to compare an applicant's abilities in critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills with those of other applicants in the admission pool. While standardized testing alone is not an indicator, in conjunction with a high school transcript that indicates actual ability across a range of disciplines, both pieces are useful in helping to predict collegiate success in the freshman year. Therefore, it is assumed that all students will take the College Board's PSAT, SAT Reasoning, and possibly SAT Subject Tests. You should also consider another major test, the ACT, which is administered by a different testing agency. Students register at www.actstudent.org, and students should choose the ACT with writing.

PSAT, SAT, ACT

PSAT, the Preliminary SAT, is an abbreviated version of the SAT and an approximate predictor of success in the SAT. Juniors take the PSAT in October as a practice test for the sequence of SAT tests that normally begin in January of the junior year. Results are distributed in December, but are never reported to colleges for admission purposes. The scores, however, may be released to some scholarship programs and are the first step in the National Merit Scholarship competition. Sophomores take the PSAT also in October for practice. The results of this test are not used for any official purpose, but may be helpful for counseling purposes. Dexter Southfield arranges for the registration and administration of these tests.

There is often discussion about how many times a student should take the SAT Reasoning Test or ACT. We recommend students register for and take the Reasoning Test and/or ACT twice in the spring of the junior year (January and May or June). Students planning to apply to very selective colleges and universities should also plan to take two or three SAT Subject Tests before completing the junior year. Based on these results and in consultation with their college counselor, students may choose to take additional ACT, SAT Reasoning, or Subject Tests in their senior year. The SAT Reasoning Test and ACT are used interchangeably by most colleges and universities that require testing as part of the admission requirements.

The process of choosing which **SAT Subject Tests** to take should include how well you have done in your coursework, how interested you are in the subject, and what you may study in college. The following is a list of guiding notes for the one-hour exams that are generally taken in June.

- Math I – recommended for those students who have performed well in Geometry and Algebra II, and for some who have taken Pre-Calculus/Trigonometry.
- Math II – recommended for those who have performed well in Pre-Calculus/Trigonometry.
- US History – recommended for those who have performed well in any section of US History.
- Biology M (molecular) – recommended for those who have performed well in biology.
- Chemistry – recommended for those who have performed well in chemistry.
- Modern foreign languages – recommended for those who have performed well at the third or fourth level, depending on the course.

French and Spanish may be taken in October (without listening) or November (with listening) only after an intensive course or an immersion experience during the preceding summer.

Chinese, Japanese, and Korean are not recommended for any student other than native speakers or fully fluent speakers. The reason for this recommendation is that the pool of test-takers in these languages is generally composed of native speakers, so the standard is extraordinarily high.

- Latin – recommended for students who have performed well at the third level or above.
- Literature – recommended for those who have performed extraordinarily well in English. It is most likely that only students in Class Eleven (June) or Class Twelve (fall) would be ready for this exam.

The College Office has booklets to help students prepare for these tests. The College Board and ACT websites offer sample test questions, test dates, registration information, and a college search tool.

Advanced Placement (AP)

AP examinations serve as the culmination of Advanced Placement courses in specific disciplines. AP courses and the related exams demand a great deal from students and are designed to inspire and challenge them with college-level academic work. Therefore, we recommend that you take an AP exam only if you have been enrolled in an AP course. Students enrolled in AP courses at Dexter Southfield are required to take these exams. We will order, register, and administer the tests for students enrolled in AP courses.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

The TOEFL, administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) is required of many students whose first language is not English. There are three sections: listening, structure, and reading. Some non-native English speakers may not have to take this exam if they have spent four years of secondary school in an English-speaking system. Students should ask the colleges and universities to which they may apply about specific requirements. The TOEFL is administered through an internet-based program with many dates and test sites available. Students are required to register themselves and should take this exam at the end of Class Eleven or in the fall of Class Twelve.

*Please check the websites of colleges that do not require the SAT or ACT for admission. Many times, admission committees may want to see results from SAT Subject Tests or Advanced Placement scores. Other committees may ask you to submit a graded paper or write a supplemental essay. You should keep your good essays in a safe place for future reference.

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

How to Choose a Teacher

Colleges are interested in learning about how you, the applicant, have been able to handle challenges in the classroom. Teachers typically write about your strengths and weaknesses in their courses. Colleges want to hear from teachers who have taught you in Class Eleven or who have known you earlier, but are expected to teach you again in Class Twelve. Think about teachers who know you well. Consider the courses you've taken that have required extra work on your part; courses where you have had a work outside of class with the teacher. Or you may think about courses that are necessary for your intended college major (for example, science and mathematics for engineering or premed). You should determine which teachers to ask to write on your behalf during the spring of Class Eleven. Please consult your college counselor if you need assistance.

How to Ask a Teacher to Write a Recommendation

After class is a good time to approach a teacher and ask if there is a time when you can meet with him or her to discuss the college recommendation. At the appointment, ask the teacher whether he or she can write strongly on your behalf. If the teacher agrees, he or she may want a copy of your questionnaire or résumé for background information. Some teachers may want to talk with you about your college and career aspirations. All this requires time for both you and the teacher. Plan ahead and approach your teacher(s) early!

Information Teachers Will Need

Four weeks prior to your earliest deadline, please check with each teacher to verify your list of colleges to which you are applying and the deadline dates. Your teacher recommenders will have access to your list through Naviance and will be submitting their letter of support and the Teacher Evaluation form electronically. However, colleges that do not use the Common Application may have their own form (electronic or paper) or a web-based link for teacher recommendations. You should provide your recommender with a completed form.

Please note: Supplemental recommendations written by a faculty adviser, a coach, an employer, or other close contact, may be mailed to each college on your list. Please discuss how to submit these letters with your college counselor.

After the Recommendation

Remember to say "thank you" to each person who writes on your behalf. When you learn of an acceptance, remember to inform those who wrote recommendations!

HOW TO WRITE YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY

In a process dominated by numbers and daunting statistics, a successful personal essay or personal statement does two things: it proves that you can write effectively and it gives the reader some insight into you as a person. It is your opportunity in 250-to 650-words to show who you are, how you think, and what kind of a contributor you will be. Your approach to this part of the application will say much about how mature you are and how serious you are about your purpose. A good essay may win over an admission committee in doubt, and a poorly written essay is likely to jeopardize a candidacy.

In preparation for completing your essay(s), you will gain substantial coaching through the college office and your English classes. In addition, remember the following basic rules:

- Use plain, simple English. The essay should reveal your authentic voice. Check your spelling and use good grammar.
- Write and rewrite.
- Have a specific focus that ties the essay together.
- Link your goals and interests with how you can contribute to the college.
- Ask your college counselor or English teacher to read your essay.

Other suggestions

- **Length:** You should adhere to the number of words specified on the application.
- **Be thoughtful**, but avoid sweeping generalizations about issues that have preoccupied philosophers and politicians over the ages. Seize every opportunity to write about what is familiar and interests you. Include anecdotes that make the essay specific and lively.
- **Sound like yourself**, and omit pretentious paragraphs. Good writing is direct. Don't be afraid of a casual writing style.
- **Avoid excuses.** Never apologize. Know the fine line between explaining a situation and trying to cover up with an alibi, or rationalizing a weakness.
- **Use humor wisely.** Some students can use humor to great effect; others can't. Ask a trusted adult to see if an attempt at humor works well.
- **Boast a little about your successes**, but use good taste. Most students are too modest.

Common categories of questions

- "Tell us about yourself..." sounds simple but is very difficult. Select meaningful events in your life, strengths and weaknesses, family background, and goals. An anecdotal approach is better than a chronological account. No lists!
- Discuss a particular interest or idea such as "What books are important to you?" or "What activity has been meaningful?" Again, no lists. What did you gain from the book or activity?
- Questions that test your originality: "If you could spend one evening with one person, who would it be and why?" sounds harder than it is. Think your answer through. Tread the fine line between the trite and the profound.
- Why do you want to come to this college? Say more than "I heard you had a good lacrosse team" and less than an essay on the merits of a liberal education. Tell why the college is your final selection, or take one feature about it that is important to you and relate it to your strengths and future goals.
- Finally... put the draft away for a day or so. Then reread it. How does it strike you? Is it well organized and interesting? Do you have a sense of the writer's personality? Ask your college advisor or English teacher to critique it.

Reminder: Some colleges ask for a graded essay so keep track of your good ones. Ask your college counselor or teachers for advice in selecting your best.

For more information, consult Resources for Research.

WHAT ABOUT FINANCIAL AID? HOW DO I APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS?

Financial aid is assistance based solely on need, the family's ability to pay versus the cost of attending a college. To determine the amount of need, a college requires your family to submit forms documenting your financial circumstances. In order to be eligible for any kind of federal assistance, the FAFSA, Free Application for Federal Student Aid, must be filled out. Most public colleges and universities require only this form. Many private colleges, however, also will require additional documentation, either through their own financial aid forms or via the College Scholarship Services' PROFILE application, or both. Both ACT.org and CollegeBoard.org have financial aid planners. However, you will be best served by checking the college's financial aid webpage or contacting the financial aid or admission offices at each college you apply to in order to discover what each institution requires of you and your family.

FAFSA4caster – Early Eligibility Indicator – In planning for college, many families of younger high school students would like a preliminary estimate of what their out-of-pocket costs might be. FAFSA4caster is a tool that instantly calculates an Expected Family Contribution, EFC. It is available online at www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov.

Most colleges will try to offer a *financial aid package* that is comprised of grant, loan, and campus job or work study job that will make up the difference between the scholarship agency's computed Estimated Family Contribution, EFC, and the college student's budget that includes tuition, room, board, transportation, books, etc.. Since college costs vary, the amount of your financial aid package may also vary from college to college. As well, all colleges will require the student to earn a substantial sum from a summer job. Sometimes private colleges are able to give enough aid to be competitive with the less expensive state colleges.

In contrast to financial aid, *merit scholarships are not based on need* but are awards made in recognition of outstanding talent. Areas such as leadership, academics, music, service, and athletics are frequently among those singled out for scholarship awards. College admissions officers determine who among their applicants have the qualifications for the named or designated scholarship funds belonging to the college.

Other scholarship awards, such as the National Merit Scholarships, are awarded on the basis of college admission test scores. Still other funds are available from national corporations or unions for the children of their employees. Some monies are available from local foundations, religious organizations, community organizations, and civic groups, as well as organizations related to specific fields of interest (such as the American Medical Association or American Bar Association). Private scholarship awards are based on applications with deadlines that frequently require an essay. In addition to websites such as FastWeb.com or SchoolSoup.com, the College Office has information about some private sources of scholarship.

ROTC scholarships are awarded by the military, not by the colleges, and cover the costs of attending colleges that are associated with a ROTC program. Students apply separately to the Army, Navy, or Air Force for the ROTC scholarships.

Senior Year Timetable for Financial Aid Applications or Forms

September: Apply for FAFSA PIN (www.pin.ed.gov)

October 1: CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE

A program of the College Board, many private colleges, universities, and scholarship programs use the supplemental information collected to help them award *non-federal* student aid funds. Available on-line October 1st at www.collegeboard.com, the application is a two-part process. The first part is registering for a customized PROFILE Application. Register *at least 4 weeks before* the earliest school or scholarship program priority filing date, which may be prior to January 1. The CSS Profile will send you a customized application to complete and return by the priority filing date. For assistance, call 1.305.829.9793.

Note: *Check the college's financial aid office website if applying Early Decision.* Each college or university handles need-based financial aid packages differently for ED applicants, but they may require a CSS Profile or institutional financial aid form to be filed by the application deadline.

January 1: FAFSA, Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Available January 1 of the student's senior year, this application should be filed by the end of February to ensure funding. Available on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov, this form is used to apply for federal student financial aid, including grants, loans, and work-study. In addition, it is used by most states and schools to award non-federal student financial aid.

Institutional Financial Aid Forms

College- or university-specific financial aid forms, which are available on their websites or paper applications. Timetables vary by institution, but February 1 is an appropriate guideline.

Financial Aid Resources

Big Future, College Board www.collegeboard.org

Net Price Calculator - Available on every college or university's website, families can input their tax information to get a customized estimate of what they will be expected to pay at that institution. One of the goals of the calculator is to allow students to consider institutions that they think are unaffordable. Another goal is to help families make sound, informed education choices. (www.collegeboard.org/npc)

www.fafsa.ed.gov

This is the on-line financial aid application for **FAFSA** and **FAFSA4caster**, and has hyperlinks to other brochures and information about financial aid. To obtain a PIN # for students and parents go to www.pin.ed.gov.

www.fastweb.com

A free scholarship search web site with a database of over 500,000 entries. The student establishes an e-mail address and completes a student profile.

www.finaid.org

A general informational site. It provides information to both students and parents concerning scholarship search, loans, and other sources of financial aid. It provides information about the financial aid application procedures, and has hyperlinks to the various financial aid applications.

www.mefacounselor.org

MEFA is a non-for-profit authority that works to make higher education more accessible and affordable through free community education programs, college savings plans, and low-cost financing options. MEFA hotline: 800-449-MEFA (6332).

www.collegeboard.org

Under the College Planning link, the family can receive general information about college costs. The online financial aid application **CSS/PROFILE** is available at <http://profileonline.collegeboard.com> for students applying to private colleges and universities that require financial information in addition to the FAFSA. A financial aid calculator is also available as well as other information.

www.salliemae.com

Sallie Mae is the largest secondary market for the purchase of the Federal Family Educational Loans. The web site contains a large amount of information about student borrowing and how to pay for college.

www.ed.gov/studentaid

Free information is available from the U.S. Department of Education.

www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/scholarship/index.html

Produced by the Federal Trade Commission, this site offers information about scholarship scams.

HOW COLLEGES MAKE THEIR DECISIONS

The single most important credential in the applicant's folder is the **academic record**, particularly that of the junior year and the first half of the senior year. In many cases a student can help his college chances by making a strong effort to improve during this time, thereby appearing to be "on the way up." However, admissions officers consider the difficulty of all courses and final grades.

Extracurricular activities, in and out of school, are also an admissions factor. Because 75% of all candidates to competitive colleges meet the academic standards, colleges look for students who will contribute to their community. Students with a developed talent in music, acting, athletics, or dance can expect to receive a special review by faculty with expertise in these areas and careful consideration by the admission office.

Standardized tests are important and most colleges require them. They regard the test scores, along with students' grades, as a predictor of academic achievement in college. At highly competitive colleges, the tests are considered carefully because it would otherwise be difficult to agree on which subjective factors to use and then quite impossible to weigh them. Some colleges use the SAT Subject Tests for placement. While evidence indicates that not everyone improves his scores through preparation courses, extra help may be useful in particularly troublesome areas.

Letters of recommendation are an essential part of each applicant's file at selective colleges. When counselors, advisers, coaches, and teachers know students well, as they do at Dexter Southfield, they can go beyond remarks about achievement and skills to comment on character and growth.

Children of alumni, or legacies, receive careful consideration at most colleges. Institutions benefit by having some students who represent a continuing tradition of loyalty and understanding. A family tie does not guarantee admissions but does prompt a "close look." These students must still meet high academic and personal standards. Legacies sometimes compete against legacies to claim a segment of their class. Applicants who have a sibling who currently attends or recently attended a college may also be given special consideration.

Interviews and visits – either at the college or with local alumni – can be helpful to both the candidate and the college. Applications are seldom as revealing of an individual's personality as a conversation. Some college admissions officers feel that a student's failure to visit a campus within 150-200 miles of his home may mean that he has no true interest in the college. Some colleges send representatives to the Boston area for interviews, and this can be sufficient if it is not possible for the student to travel to colleges that deem interviews important.

Essay or personal statement – This part of your application is the only one entirely in your control. It is an opportunity for you to show what is best about you and what is important to you. The essay is often a "tip" factor when a candidate is on the fence. Take time and care with essays, and start early.

Finally, the correspondence with colleges should be initiated and carried out by the student. Most admissions offices see this approach as a reflection of a student's sense of responsibility and independence. They also note the student's accuracy, clarity, courtesy, and maturity.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

- Recommendations from Uninformed Parties – Messages from family friends, distant relatives, or parents' business associates who do not know you well tend to do more harm than good.
- Excessive Communication from the School – There is a relationship dependent upon mutual respect and professional cooperation between institutions that must outlast every student's candidacy. Dexter Southfield will do everything it can to present each candidate in the best possible light.
- Excessive Communication from Parents – Admission committees are not positively influenced by communication from parents that exceeds what is necessary. The application and possible match are the student's, not the parents'.
- Unrealistic Expectations – There is usually nothing in the application which will overcome the basic facts of achievement and potential.

ATHLETIC RECRUITMENT AND THE COLLEGE PROCESS

The recruitment of high school student athletes adds another complex layer to the college admission process, and families engaged in recruiting need to become familiar with a new set of terminology and rules that govern this process.

What is a “student-athlete”?

As a student, you become a “prospective student-athlete” at a particular college if any coach or representative of the college’s athletics interest (booster or representative) approaches you or any member of your family about enrolling and participating in athletics at that college. Such activities include:

- Providing you with an official visit that is arranged and paid by the college or university
- Placing more than one telephone call to you or any other member of your family
- Visiting you or any other member of your family anywhere other than the college campus.

Depending on the sport, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, or NCAA, allows college coaches to personally contact prospective recruits as early as March of the junior year. “Any face-to-face meeting between a college coach and you or your parents, during which you say more than ‘hello’, is a contact. Also, any prearranged meeting that occurs at your high school or competition or practice site is a contact, regardless of the conversation” (*NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete*).

There are rules governing the number of off college campus visits as well as the number of weekly contacts initiated by the coach or program representative. A contact can be a letter, telephone call, or visit. These regulations apply to the coach or representative contacting the student-athlete, but there are no rules governing contact initiated by the student. That is, a prospective student-athlete may e-mail, call, or write a coach as many times as he chooses.

How do I contact a coach?

At any time during his high school career, a student-athlete may initiate contact with a coach. This can be through a summer camp experience, a telephone call, or by writing a letter or e-mail.

<p>Sample E-mail</p> <p>Dear Coach (Last Name):</p> <p>I am making [or— I have made] an application to your school and am interested in learning about your (name of sport) program at (college). I am enclosing academic, athletic, and personal information that you may find helpful. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.</p> <p>Sincerely yours, Your Fullname Email address Phone or Cell Number</p>
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Differences in Recruiting

As you may know, the NCAA classifies colleges and universities into three divisions or levels. These divisions determine academic eligibility requirements and whether a college or university provides merit awards in the form of athletic scholarships or grants-in-aid. Generally, both Division I and II schools have athletic merit awards and academic eligibility requirements. The exceptions are Division I, Ivy League schools that do not provide athletic grants-in-aid. Division III schools do not have either academic eligibility requirements or athletic scholarships.

Each coach has his or her own personal style of recruiting prospective student-athletes. Some do all the recruiting themselves; others depend on assistant coaches or information gleaned from their professional counterparts. Some rely heavily on written communication; others prefer telephone contacts. Depending on the sport, college coaches also must adhere to specific rules for the timing, types and numbers of contacts, campus and off-

campus visits, and evaluation periods. You should establish folders for each college you are considering and keep information about the college in that folder. This will help you compare institutions, programs, and coaches.

The NCAA Eligibility Center

The NCAA Eligibility Center certifies the academic and amateur credentials of all college-bound student-athletes who wish to compete in NCAA Division I or II athletics. The individual student-athlete is responsible for achieving and protecting his or her eligibility status.

To Register

To register with the Eligibility Center (www.eligibilitycenter.org), you must complete the Student Release Form and amateurism questionnaire online during your junior year and send the Eligibility Center the registration fee of \$70 for domestic students (or an SAT or ACT-qualified fee waiver).

Go online; select **Prospective Student-Athletes** and then register as a U.S. or international student. Complete the Student Release Form and include your credit or debit card information to pay the fee. Then follow instructions to complete the transaction. In addition, you must request an official score report from either the College Board or ACT. Use the code “9999” when contacting either testing agency. **You will not be allowed to practice or play on a Division I or II college team without certification from the Eligibility Center.**

Once you are registered, Dexter Southfield is authorized to send your current transcript, proof of graduation, and other academic information to the NCAA Eligibility Center. Also, the Eligibility Center is authorized to send this information to all colleges requesting your eligibility status.

Core Course Requirements

A core course is a college-preparatory course taught by a qualified instructor, which fulfills a graduation requirement in an academic area and is approved by the NCAA.

All prospective Division I and II student-athletes who enter college after August 1, 2016, must have a minimum 2.0, or C, grade point average in 10 required core courses completed prior to the seventh semester and seven of the ten must be a combination of English, math or natural or physical science and achieve a combined SAT or ACT sum score that is indexed to the GPA. Students who do not meet these academic requirements are “nonqualifiers” and will not be allowed to participate in athletics competition or practice as a college freshman.

Requirement to graduate with your high school class

You must graduate from high school on schedule in eight semesters with your incoming ninth-grade class. If you graduate from high school in eight or more semesters, you must complete your core course requirements during your first eight semesters.

The role of athletics in the admission process

As a “recruited student-athlete,” you are required to file a completed application by the date established by the college or university to which you are applying. You are also responsible for the application fee unless you are granted a waiver by the college or the coach. The school’s college counselors and coaches are available to families in assisting them with questions about the admission process and the status of the applicant at a particular institution. We work with both the athletic department and the admissions office.

In the application process, generally, Division I sports programs have more influence in the process than Divisions II or III. Those Division I sports programs with scholarships have specified spaces in the entering freshman class for students who meet the entrance requirements established by the college or university. Usually, their recruited athletes are rated in a pecking order according to the needs of the specific sports program. For example, the soccer program needs a goalkeeper in a given year so goalkeepers will be rated higher by the coach – and get more push – than field players. There has been a trend in recent years for coaches to push the Early Decision or Early Action process for their recruited athletes. From the coaches’ viewpoint, this helps ensure the student’s matriculation at their institution and to discourage the number of contacts from other institutions.

For more information, see Resources for Research.

PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS STUDENTS

If you are considering a major in music, art, dance, or drama, you will have different options to consider and may have different admission requirements to fulfill than your classmates who will be applying to more traditional institutions.

A Difference of Degree

Students interested in pursuing the arts have three four-year, undergraduate degree options: a **bachelor of arts** (BA) degree with a major in the arts, a **bachelor of fine arts** (BFA) for artists/performers, or **bachelor of music** (BM) for musicians. The BA degree is the typical liberal arts degree – students who major in languages, mathematics, science, and the humanities also earn BA degrees. The BFA or BM degree is a professional degree; their requirements are focused, and you will have less flexibility to study other areas of personal interest.

With a BA you will take a lot of courses outside of your major with approximately twelve or more courses in your major. That is, the BA degree usually requires 120+ credits of which 36 credits are in the major. On the other hand, a BM is essentially a professional degree. Of the 120+ credits required for the degree, approximately 36 will be in the liberal arts. The remainder will be in music or degree-related courses such as private lessons, conducting classes, music history, music theory, composition, etc.

Which degree you choose depends on your college and career goals. If you have a strong commitment to your art and desire an intense and competitive college experience, a BFA or BM might be right for you. If you would rather study a variety of subjects along with your arts major, a BA may be a better degree to pursue.

Types of Colleges

Visual and performing arts students have several types of colleges to consider:

- Conservatories/Art Schools – offer an immersion-type experience; students earn a BFA or BM; all students will be artists; it is a highly competitive learning atmosphere
- University-based arts programs – offer BFA/BM and BA degrees; opportunity to pursue a specialized degree while taking liberal arts courses; option of pursuing a dual degree that may take more than four years
- Liberal arts colleges – offer broadly-based BA with option for a double-major

The Application Process

All students applying to arts programs must fill out a typical college application and prepare a portfolio or audition as part of the application. Although your portfolio or audition is an important part of the application, arts programs do consider your academic record and test scores. Each arts program has different requirements. You should check college websites or contact the schools as early as possible (during junior year) to learn their portfolio or audition requirements. Most schools prefer the student to audition or present the portfolio during a scheduled campus visit and this usually requires a student to arrange the appointment months in advance.

Assessing Your Abilities

Do you have the talent to be successful in the arts? Now is the time to seek objective opinions of your abilities. In addition to asking for honest advice and evaluation from high school and private teachers, students can get outside assessment from professionals in their chosen field.

Visual arts students can receive portfolio evaluations and college information at one of the National Portfolio Days sponsored by an association of arts schools and art departments at universities. For more information, talk to your college counselor or art teacher, or visit www.portfolioday.net.

Other Considerations

All students benefit from visiting the colleges that interest them and asking questions about academics, student life, and other facets of college life. In addition, you may want to consider the following:

- Location – may be of more importance to arts students than to students in other majors;
- Facilities – look at a college's studio space or practice rooms, performance or exhibit venues on campus, darkroom facilities, computer resources, etc. How accessible are these resources to students?
- Reputation and philosophy – talk to your arts teachers; ask colleges about career opportunities and place-

ment of graduates. Get some idea of how the program is perceived by professionals in your field of interest. What is the college's emphasis or philosophy about education? One music program may emphasize classical music while another specializes in modern forms, like jazz. What is the intensity of competitiveness, workload, and pressure? Talk with students and faculty during your visit to help you gauge the daily pressures.

- Fit – find a college that fits your personality, interests, and goals.

Performing and Visual Arts (PVA) College Fairs
usually in the Fall

The PVA College Fairs are designed for students interest in pursuing undergraduate and graduate study in the areas of music, dance, theater, visual arts, graphic design, and other related disciplines. They provide information about:

- Educational opportunities
- Admission and financial aid
- Portfolio Days
- Audition and entrance requirements
- And much more!

You will have the opportunity to meet with representatives from colleges, universities, conservatories, festivals and other educational institutions with specialized programs in the visual and performing arts.

Suggested Resources

Creative Colleges: A Guide for Student Actors, Artists, Dancers, Musicians and Writers by Elaine Loveland (Paperback, 2010)

College Guide for Performing Arts Majors: Real-World Admission Guide for All Dance, Music, and Theatre Majors by Peterson's and Fern Oram (Paperback, 2008)

College Guide for Visual Arts Majors: Real-World Admission Guide for All Fine Arts, Design, and Media Majors by Peterson's and Fern Oram (Paperback, 2008)

“PVA Tips for Performing & Visual Arts Students” by Jennifer Gross (2009), <http://www.nacacnet.org/EventsTraining/CollegeFairs/pva/Pages/PVATips.asp>

A Guide to College Choices for the Performing and Visual Arts by Ed Schoenbert (Paperback, 2008)

The Business of Being an Artist by Daniel Grant, 3rd ed. (Paperback, 2000)

RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH

Admissions Process and Guides

Looking Beyond the Ivy League: Finding the College that's Right For You by Loren Pope (2007)
Colleges That Change Lives... by Loren Pope (2006)
The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College by Jacques Steinberg (2002)
Get Into College, Rachel Korn and Jennifer Kabat, eds.(2009)
What You Don't Know Can Keep You Out of College by Don Dunbar with G.F. Lichtenberg(2007)
Colleges Unranked by Lloyd Thacker (2005)
The New Rules of College Admissions by Stephen Kramer and Michael London, eds. (2006)
The Fiske Guide to Colleges
Insider's Guide to Colleges
Rugg's Recommendations
The Princeton Review's *Best 373 Colleges* for lists of overlap schools (also www.princetonreview.com)
How to Write A Winning College Application Essay by Michael Mason (2001)
50 Successful Harvard Application Essays... by The Harvard Crimson Staff (2005)
On Writing Well by William Zinsser
The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values by William G. Bowen and James L. Shulman
The Student-Athlete and College Recruiting: How to Prepare... by Rick Wire (2003)
Student-Athlete Handbook for the 21st Century by Christine Grimes (2006)

Internet

The College Board, <http://www.collegeboard.com>
The College Application Essay by Sarah McGinty (2004), <http://www.collegeboard.com>
Colleges That Change Lives by Loren Pope, <http://www.ctclonline.com>
National Association for College Admissions Counseling, <http://www.nacacnet.org>
National Collegiate Athletic Association, <http://www.ncaa.org>
Peterson's Guides (also www.petersons.com)
Princeton Review, <http://www.princetonreview.com>

Special Interest Sites

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

www.hbcumentor.org
www.africanamericans.com/HistoricallyBlackColleges.
www.blackcollegesearch.com
www.blackenterprise.com/lists/college.asp

Hispanic Colleges

www.hacu.net

Native American College Resources

www.aihec.org

Catholic Colleges

www.catholiccollegesonline.org

Christian Colleges and Universities

www.cccu.org
<http://christiancollegeguide.net>

Jewish Colleges and Universities

www.hillel.org
www.uscj.org

Students with Disabilities

www.Idonline.org/Id_indepth/postsecondary
www.college-scholarships.com/learning_disabilities.htm

Studying Abroad

www.studyabroad.com

Combined BA-MD Programs

<http://services.aamc.org/currrdir/section3/degree2>

International Students

www.studyusa.com
www.travel.state.gov/visa/

Student-Athletes

NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete,
http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.html

NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics), www.naia.org

Financial Aid

Federal Student Aid, www.fafsa.ed.gov.
College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile and Estimated Family Contribution calculator, www.collegeboard.com
Estimating Need-Based Aid:
www.finaid.org/calculators/finaidestimate.phtml
www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov

SAMPLE RÉSUMÉ FOR COLLEGE/SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION:

STUDENT BROWN
23 MILL CREEK RD.
BOSTON, MA 02000
(617) 500-6000
student@email.com

EDUCATION:

Dexter School/Southfield School - 10, 11, 12 – expected graduation: June 2013
Boston High School 9

AWARDS AND HONORS:

Math Prize: 9
Citizenship Award: 9
Public Speaking Prize: 10
Poetry Out Loud MA Semi-Finalist: 11

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

Staff Writer for School Newspaper, *The Drumlin*: 9, 10, 11
Varsity Tennis: 9, 10, 11, 12 (Captain, 12)
Student Council Representative: 11, 12
Spanish Club: 11, 12 (Secretary, 12)
Cast member for school musical, *Grease*: 11

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

Church Youth Group: 9, 10, 11, 12
Volunteer at Boston Medical Center 10, 11, 12 (200 total hours)
Tutor at Indian Creek Elementary School: 12
Volunteer at Angell MSPCA: 12

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES:

Summer Science Camp at Noname University: 1999
Church Mission Trip: 2000

WORK EXPERIENCE:

Dinosaur Den Day Care: Playground Helper, 10
Dairy Queen: Counter Helper, 10, 11
Whole Foods Market: Checker, 12
Dexter Enrichment Camp: Counselor for 5-6 year olds, 10, 11

GLOSSARY

ACT - American College Test – This test measures the knowledge, understanding, and skills you have acquired throughout your education. It is a battery of tests in four areas – English, mathematics, reading comprehension, and natural sciences – which yields a score of 1-36 in each area and a composite score – and an optional Writing test. The ACT is much more popular in the Midwest and South and is accepted interchangeably with SAT program tests by all colleges across the nation. Check your college catalog carefully to determine whether you should submit ACT results. Dexter Southfield is not a testing center for the ACT, but the College Office can give you registration information. www.actstudent.org

AP - Advanced Placement Tests – Offered by the College Board in more than 25 subject areas, these tests measure college level knowledge in specific fields of study. Tests are given in mid-May and graded on a scale of 1-5. Colleges may grant course credit or exemptions for scores of 3, 4, or 5. The College Office has an AP coordinator who arranges for the registration and administration of tests in the areas in which the School gives AP courses. www.collegeboard.com

Candidate Notification Date - The date by which a college notifies a student of the admissions decision.

Candidate's Reply Date - The date by which you must inform the college of your intention to enroll, usually by May 1.

Common Application Form - A single application form accepted by over 300 colleges. After a student completes the original application form and supplemental questions online, he or she submits applications electronically via the Common Application. www.commonapp.org

Common Application Supplements - Many of the selective colleges and universities accepting the Common Application also require students to submit additional information to complete the application. Supplements to the Common Application are available online from the Common Application website.

CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE - This is an additional financial aid form used by many private colleges and universities to determine eligibility for institutional financial aid dollars. www.collegeboard.org or <http://profileonline.collegeboard.org>

Deferred Admission - This program allows you to apply for admission during your senior year, and if accepted, to postpone your matriculation for one year after you have graduated from high school.

Early Action - An admission plan of an increasing number of colleges whereby a student can submit an application, usually by November 1, and receive a decision, but not be obligated to enroll if accepted. Students are usually accepted or deferred into the regular pool of applicants, but some are denied. Students who are denied admission are not reevaluated with the regular decision applicant pool.

Early Admission - Some colleges allow exceptional students to enter as a freshman without taking a senior year of high school.

Early Decision - An admission plan of a number of colleges whereby a student can apply to his or her first choice college in the fall of the senior year and be notified of the college's admissions decision by mid-December. The student is morally obligated to enroll if accepted, make no additional applications, and withdraw other applications previously submitted. Students who are deferred by the college will be reconsidered with the regular decision applicants. Students who are denied will have time to make other application deadlines. A few colleges and universities offer an Early Decision II program which follows the same procedures as mentioned above but application deadlines are later, usually between December and February. Students receive their admission decisions approximately four weeks after the application deadline.

EFC (Estimated Family Contribution) – Determined by FAFSA results, the amount parents and students are ex-

pected to give per year as a part of a need-based financial aid award.

Eligibility Center – The NCAA Eligibility Center establishes the academic eligibility and amateurism of prospective student-athletes who wish to compete in Division I or II athletic programs. These students must file a “Student Release Form” (available online), no later than fall of the senior year to begin the process. www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): These forms (available online) must be completed by every family filing for college financial aid in order to qualify for federal financial assistance funds. (Completion timetable: January 1-February 1) www.fafsa.ed.gov

GPA (Grade Point Average): Some colleges will compute an average of the student’s grades for the four high school years from the applicant’s transcript. The GPA is also a factor in the award of ROTC Scholarships.

Naviance - an electronic college data management system used by the College Office to track student data including standardized test scores, college choices, and college applications. Once a student applies to a college, the College Office can send electronic copies of the transcript, required forms, and recommendations. Students are registered and trained on Naviance Family Connection. They learn how to access and use their personal site to help organize their college planning and search process. Students can obtain general college information and access specific college websites. The college data in Family Connection allows a student to search for individual college matches. Also, they can store a personal game plan, and develop:

- a list of possible careers and majors
- a resume
- a list of colleges the student is considering
- a list of colleges to which the student is applying
- college application tasks
- application results

This is private information that can only be accessed by the student or the College Office.

Net Price Calculator - A tool available on every college or university’s website, it “provides information to families by looking at the financial and academic characteristics of the student and estimating a financial aid package based on the awarding policies and practices of the institution. It is not a final or guaranteed financial aid award,” (see p. 14). www.collegeboard.org/npc

Non-Standard Testing – available for students with properly diagnosed and documented learning disabilities or physical handicaps. Special conditions for qualified students include extended testing time. Students interested in pursuing non-standard testing should immediately contact the College Office for guidance. In general, a student should have all paperwork in order by the end of Class Nine. The College Board and ACT require approximately eight weeks to process a completed set of materials, which must be on hand at the student’s school for four months prior.

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test): This is a two-hour version of the SAT Reasoning Test (described below), administered to sophomores and juniors in October. Its results are useful in predicting how a student will perform on the SAT Reasoning Test. It is also the first step necessary to be considered for scholarships offered by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. This test is administered at Dexter Southfield by the college counselors. No prior pre-registration by the student is necessary.

Restrictive/Single-Choice Early Action – Interpreted by most colleges using a Restrictive Early Action or Single-Choice Early Action plan, a student is able to file only one early application. Please consult each college for its own specific interpretation.

Rolling Admission - According to this plan of many large universities and some smaller schools across the nation, a student may apply at any time up to the application deadline. Four to six weeks from the time the file is complete, the student will be notified of his or her admission decision.

SAT Reasoning Test - The SAT Reasoning Test is a three hour-45 minute objective test designed to provide a standard measure of the critical reading, mathematical, and writing skills of candidates for college admission. Scores range from 200 – 800 in each area. Students should take this test at least twice, in January and May of their junior year, and probably again in October or November of the senior year. Registration booklets and examination guides are available in the College Office and online. www.collegeboard.org/testing

SAT Subject Tests – Each one hour test measures a student’s knowledge in a specific subject area, and may be used by colleges in making both admission and placement decisions. The College Office recommends that students consider taking three of these tests in June of their junior year, and again in either October, November, or December of their senior year, as needed. Students should speak to the College Office for individual planning.

Score Choice--Students have the option of requesting a full SAT score report that includes the results of all testing or a Reasoning Test by test date. They also have the option of choosing specific Subject Tests, if applicable. Students who wish to request ACT results must request by test date only.

Score Report – Many colleges require an official report from the testing agency (either the SAT’s College Board or the ACT). When you register for your last set of tests, you can request that your scores be sent to four colleges without charge. If you are applying to more than four colleges that require an official score report, you must request a copy through the appropriate testing agency and include the required fee for each additional score report to be sent. Student-athletes filing with the NCAA Eligibility Center — code 9999 — must request an official score report.

Universal College Application – A new application available on the web that is currently accepted by 58 public and private colleges and universities in the US. www.universalcollegeapp.com

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Many BISCCA counselors contributed to this guide and are due thanks.