

COLLEGE PLANNING GUIDE: CLASS OF 2025

New Milford High School
Counseling Department



Contents

- Graduation Requirements
- Transcript Information
- Standardized Tests: SAT & ACT
- College Admissions: NACAC Important Factors
- College Jargon
- College Search
- How to Manage your College List
- College Visits
- College Interviews and Questions
- Recommendations
- The Application
- Financial Aid
- College Planning Calendar

Graduation Requirements: 130 credits

Subject	NJ Minimum	School Minimum	Recommended for College Entrance
English	4 Years	4 Years	4 Years
Social Studies	3 Years	3 Years	4 Years
Mathematics	3 Years	3 Years	4 Years
Science	3 Years	3 Years	4 Years
World Language	1 Years	1 Years	3-4 Years
Phys. Ed/ Health	4 Years	4 Years	4 Years
Visual & Performing Arts	1 year	1 year	
21st Century Careers & Skills	1 year	1 year	
Financial Literacy	½ year	½ year	



Transcript Information



- Lists Completed Courses and Courses In Progress
- Final Grades Received in Completed Courses
- Grade Point Average and Weighting Scale
- Total Number of Credits Earned
- New Milford HS does NOT rank

Standardized Tests: SAT and ACT



SAT

- The sum of two (Evidence-Based Reading and Writing & Mathematics) sections will be scored on a scale of 400-1600. Students can earn a scaled score between 200-800 on each section for a total of 1600 possible points.
- To register on-line go to the College Board website at www.collegeboard.com/sat



ACT

- Scores are reported on a 1-36 scale.
- Register online at www.actstudent.org
- The ACT includes sections in English, math, reading, and science reasoning, optional essay.
- We recommend signing up for ACT Plus Writing.
- The composite score is what colleges are referring to in their testing profiles.
- The ACT composite score is the average of a student's scores on each subtest.




Fair Test

- The National Center for Fair and Open Testing helps to ensure the evaluation of students is fair and open.
- To find more than 2000 schools that do not require any testing, visit www.fairtest.org.



NACAC Factors Important to College Admissions

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) annually surveys member colleges and universities to see what admissions factors figure most prominently into admissions decisions. The results from the 2023 State of College Admission Report are shown below and the full report can be found on the School Counseling website.

1. Grades in College Prep Courses
 2. Strength of Curriculum
 3. Essay or Writing Sample
 4. Demonstrated Interest
 5. Counselor Recommendation
 6. Teacher Recommendation
 7. Extracurricular Activities
 8. Admission Test Scores (SAT, ACT)
- 

College Jargon

- **Early Decision (binding)**- A binding contract between a student and one college or university. Students can apply Early Decision at the beginning of senior year (the deadline is usually 11/1 or 11/15). Early Decision candidates are notified by mid-December of their senior year, allowing sufficient time to apply to other colleges, if necessary.
- **Early Action (non-binding)**- Non-binding, and students can apply to many schools Early Action. Students who apply Early Action are notified by December. In most cases, Early Action applicants may apply to other colleges and do not have to make a decision until the standard reply date in May.
- **Single Choice Early Action** - Non-binding at some select schools. However, students may not apply to any other Early Decision or Early Action program until notified. Check each school's policy as each may be different.
- **Regular Decision** - The normal process by which students apply by published deadlines, with promise of receiving an admissions decision no later than April 1 of their senior year.
- **Rolling Admissions**- The practice used by some colleges that process a candidate's application as soon as it is complete and notify the applicant of the decision in a timely manner.

College Jargon

- **Priority Decision**- The meaning will vary from school to school so it is wise to look at each school individually. For example, the Priority application may provide benefits in terms of financial aid and scholarship packages, housing advantages, and/ or priority for course registration. Thus, it is worth a quick email to admission offices (or a phone call) to find out the benefits of meeting a Priority Deadline at a particular school.
- **Deferred**- When a college does not make a decision on a student who has applied under an EA/ED program, and places their application in the regular decision pool. A college may want to wait until additional information is provided by the student before a decision is made (ex. mid-year grades).
- **Wait List**- A response to an applicant indicating that their application has been given careful consideration, but the limit of accepted students has already been reached; wait listed students may be admitted after May 1 if space becomes available. If you are put on a waiting list by a college or university and are later admitted by that institution, you may accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify any other college or university where you previously indicated your intention to enroll.

College Search: Choosing the College that is Right for You

As you begin your college search, it helps to identify your preferences. This checklist will help you narrow your choices.

Academic Curriculum / Program

- Is my intended major readily available so that I can graduate in 4 years?
- What is the reputation of my intended major?
- Can I change majors easily?

Academic Support Services

- Are special services such as tutoring available?

Class Size and Teaching Approach

- How big are the classes?
- What is the teacher-to-student ratio?
- Are classes taught by professors or teaching assistants?

Affiliation or Institution

- Public / Private
- Religious
- Vocational
- Two-year / Four-year
- Co-educational / Single-Gender
- Military

Academic Facilities

- Science labs and facilities
- Library / Media Center
- Career Center
- Campus Development

Retention, Graduation, and Placement Rates

- What percentage return for their sophomore year?
- What percentage graduate in 4 years?
- What percentage are placed in jobs in their field?
- What percentage go on to graduate school?

Size of Undergraduate Student Body

- Small (up to 2,500 students)
- Medium (2,500-7,500)
- Large (7,500 +)

Location

- Anywhere in U.S.
- Anywhere in multi-state region
- Anywhere in state
- Immediate area (75-100 miles)
- Commuting distance

College Setting

- City: small, medium, large
- Suburban, small town, rural

Campus Environment

- Is the campus community lively and spirited?
- Are faculty members accessible?
- Is there a diverse student population?
- Is campus security adequate?
- Is there guaranteed undergraduate housing available?
- Do you have Fraternities / Sororities on campus?

Activities

- Division I, II or III Sports / Intramurals
- Community / Religious / Volunteer Activities
- Social Opportunities / Cultural Activities
- Internships / Mentoring

Costs

- Costs of tuition, room and board, books
- Hidden fees - parking, registration, fitness center
- Availability of Grants / Scholarships / Loans / Part-Time Jobs



Reach Schools

Your academic record / test scores fall slightly below the average accepted academic record / test scores at a particular college / university.

- 1-2 Reach Schools Recommended



Match Schools

Your academic record / test scores meet with the average accepted academic record / test scores at a particular college / university.

- 3-5 Match Schools Recommended



Safety Schools

Your academic record / test scores are well above the average accepted academic record / test scores.

- 1-2 Safety Schools Recommended



How to Manage your College List

College Visits

- College visits are encouraged. How else will you know whether the environment, programs, etc. match your needs? Therefore, it is preferable to make them at a time when the college is in session. If you are not able to visit a college during the application process, you most certainly will want to visit if you are accepted and before you decide which college to attend.
- Why is it so important for a student to visit a college or school? A student makes a visit to get the "feel" of the campus -- to actually see where students live, study, and learn. There simply is no substitute for visiting and seeing for yourself. The student is attempting to match their personality with the personality of the college.





College Visits

Plan to:

- Attend an open house (make sure you sign up).
- Attend student information sessions (make sure you sign in).
- Take a guided tour of the campus (make sure you sign in).
- Eat in the student dining halls.
- Sit in on a class.
- Speak with a faculty member in the department or major in which you are interested.
- Arrange for an overnight stay, if possible.
- Evaluate facilities, especially those related to your major such as art studios, computer labs, science labs, broadcasting studios, etc.
- Check websites regularly for updated information.
- If you plan to apply ED, try to spend 24-hours on campus. “Live” on campus for a day.

Note: Students get two excused absences for college visits with documentation.

Recommendation Process

Teacher Recommendations:

- In June, please politely ask 2 teachers in person to write your recommendation.
- Typically, colleges want to hear from **two junior year core subject** teachers (example: math or science, English or history).
- In September, follow up with both teachers and follow procedures for requesting their recommendations through Naviance.
- Don't forget to send a thank you note.

Counselor Recommendations:

- Along with your transcript, a secondary school report, and school profile, a counselor recommendation is a required and is an integral piece of your application materials.
- **In order for us to create the most complete portrait of you as a student and individual, we need the following from you (the forms can be found in Naviance under "About Me" tab, "Surveys") before the end of June:**
 1. Student Brag Sheet
 2. Student Activities Record
 3. Parent Brag Sheet



The Common Application/Coalition Application

Common Application -

one application that can be
submitted online to over 1000
member colleges.

www.commonapp.org

Coalition Application -

one application that can be
submitted online to over 150
member colleges.

www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org

A Financial Aid Checklist

- Send FAFSA as soon as possible (<https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>). This is available October 1.
- Complete the CSS Profile, if required by the school (<https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>).
- Do not pay for scholarship and loan information; the web provides all the information you will need.
- Contact financial aid representatives from colleges you are interested in attending.
- Investigate every source of help.
- Know which applications to file and when.
- Submit admissions and aid applications before the deadlines.
- Respond promptly to requests for additional information.
- Keep copies of all documents.
- Please find more information on the Financial Aid section of the School Counseling web page.