

Senior Guide

Making Choices After High School



Guidance Department

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INTRODUCTION

This reference guide will help guide you through your post high school planning process, a process that can be complicated and frustrating if not approached with some organization and attention to detail. The Senior Guide, prepared by the Guidance Staff of Manchester Regional High School, is based on the assumption that its readers have thought through the process. We encourage all students to consider some of the following variables when making a post-secondary decision: aptitudes, talents, interests, strengths, and long-term goals.

Our intent in compiling this guide is to assist you in the stages of the planning process – selecting the right post-secondary plans, researching the options, examining the resource materials, communicating with post-secondary institutions, seeking financial aid if necessary, and understanding the jargon. Our hope is that this guide will be used as a tool for reference and information, certainly not as a replacement for the most significant resource of all – your parents/guardians and your guidance counselor.

We wish you well in the process of planning and encourage you to tap all available resources to assist you in your efforts. We are always ready and willing to respond to your needs and questions. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

School Administration

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***Letters denote Counselor caseloads: first initial of students' last names.**

Step-By-Step Calendar Guide

Junior Year

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| October | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSAT • Update NAVIANCE Profile |
| March | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register for the May SAT or ACT online. The May SAT I is the only test used for qualification for an Edward J. Bloustein Scholarship. |
| May/June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT I and SAT II • Discuss your post-high school plans with your counselor and write/email schools for information and applications • Get a Social Security Number if you don't have one: you will need it for post-secondary institutions and financial aid applications. Social Security applications are available at the local post office. |
| June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletes: Register with NCAA. |
| Summer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit the schools you are interested in attending. • Compile a list of approximately 5 schools of interest. |

Senior Year

| | |
|------------------|---|
| September | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register online for the ACT or SAT. |
| October | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin filling out college/university/post-secondary school applications. Pay careful attention to application deadlines. All completed applications must be submitted to the Guidance Office at least one month prior to deadline. • Transcript Release Forms submitted to Guidance. • Register online for ACT or SAT. |
| December | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See your guidance counselor for all Financial Aid forms and information. |
| January | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply online for a FAFSA pin number (Parents and Students). • URGENT! Complete and submit FAFSA online. • Remind your parents to prepare their Federal Income Tax Return as early as possible and keep photocopies of Form 1040 or 1040A! They do not have to file until April 15, but they will need the data for financial aid by mid-January. |
| February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See your guidance counselor for scholarship information. |
| April | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships applications due in Guidance Office |
| May | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Placement Exams |

ALL POST-SECONDARY APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE GUIDANCE OFFICE AT LEAST ONE MONTH PRIOR TO DEADLINE!

NAVIANCE

Naviance is a comprehensive college and career readiness solution that helps align student strengths and interests to post-secondary goals, and to improve student outcomes.

To access MRHS Naviance, please click link below:

<https://succeed.naviance.com/auth/signin>

*Keep your NAVIANCE Profile
up-to-date!*



WHAT TO DO AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

A four-year college or university is great for:

- Students with definitive educational and/or career plans
- Students with a G.P.A. above 2.6
- Students seeking new challenges and experiences



COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A community college is great for:

- Students who are unsure of educational or career plans
- Students with a G.P.A. below 2.6
- Students on limited budgets
- Students who want to combine work and education

WORK

You can get valuable experience and save some money while you're trying out a possible career. If you'd like to know where the jobs are and where they'll be in the future, see your counselor. Some fields are growing and others are shrinking, and it's important to know which is which.



MILITARY SERVICE

Many young men and women enlist in the armed forces to get started. The pay is good and the job is secure. You can pick the kind of training you want and decide where you will be stationed. You can even get your college education free.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL, TRADE SCHOOL, OR AN APPRENTICESHIP

If you know what career you want, these are three ways to get the right kind of training. Your counselor can help you find the right school, program or apprenticeship – just come in and ask.



STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Plan your course of action carefully:
 - **Meet with your counselor** to discuss plans
 - Consult catalogs and profiles of schools
 - If you do not have one, apply for a **Social Security Number**.
 - Complete and submit a signed **Transcript Release Form**. School records will not be sent unless this signed form is on file
 - Submit all notices of acceptance, denials and financial awards to your counselor
 - Select a variety of schools (be sure to include a “safety “ school)
 - Discuss with your parents how much money is available for school
 - Talk to as many school representatives as possible
 - Visit schools of your choice (school vacations are a good time to visit schools out of the area)
 - Check your permanent record to be sure it is completely accurate; see your counselor to make any corrections needed
 - Complete your **NAVIANCE profile** thoroughly
 - **Listen to the morning announcements** for open houses, college fairs, scholarships, etc.
 - See your counselor if you need any assistance

2. Request for applications online. Fill them out completely. Most schools prefer that you complete your application online and through NAVIANCE. Before submitting your applications, have them checked by your parents and counselor. If lengthy statements or essays are required on the application, have your English teacher check your writing for grammar, structure, etc.

USE THE COMMON APPLICATION WHENEVER POSSIBLE!

3. Bring completed applications and fees to the Guidance Department. Remember to complete the Transcript Release Form, which is available in Guidance Department. **On-line applications must be reported to Guidance.**

4. **Secure recommendations** from teachers; don't wait until the last minute. Ask teachers early in the school year.

5. **Submit applications** at least one month prior to due date.

6. **Report acceptances** and rejections to your counselor.

7. **Be alert to scholarship announcements** made by the Guidance Department.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Help your son/daughter **plan a program** for post-secondary opportunities.
2. **Make an appointment** with the counselor to clarify your child's potential and discuss questions that you might have.
3. **Know what you can afford** (tuition, travel, books, miscellaneous) and discuss these issues frankly with your child.
4. **Plan family visits to schools.**
5. Be sure **deadlines are met** for both applications and scholarships.
6. **Periodically check with your child** on his/her application progress and follow up with his/her counselor.
7. **Attend Financial Aid Night** at Manchester in the winter of your child's junior and/or senior year.
8. **Apply for a FAFSA Pin** Number and complete and submit the FAFSA on-line.
9. **Complete the FAFSA** form as early as possible.
10. **File Federal Income Tax** as early as possible and keep a copy of form 1040 or 1040A.



COUNSELOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Consult** with both students and parents.
2. Keep students and parents aware of trends and general information pertaining to **testing and admission requirements.**
3. **Keep reference data and NAVIANCE as current as possible.**
4. **Keep scholarship information up-to-date.**
5. **Meet with students** to regularly update and encourage their progress.
6. **Collate application materials.**

TESTING

Most schools require students to take the: SAT, SAT II, TOEFL, or ACT as part of the decision-making process. Check the requirements for each school, to be sure that you have taken all necessary tests. **MRHS CEEB # 311124**

ACT – AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING PROGRAM

Although best known as an achievement test, the ACT is actually a four-part assessment instrument that includes four multiple-choice curriculum-based tests of educational development: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science reasoning. This test may be preferred by colleges/universities in the Midwest and West. ACT applications, test dates, and registration deadlines are available in the Guidance Department. Students should check with particular schools to make sure that the ACT is accepted, or if it is preferred over the SAT.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMINATIONS

Students who take Advanced Placement courses at MRHS are eligible to take the Advanced Placement Examinations in specific subject areas. Many colleges/universities accept qualifying examination scores for college/university credit and/or student placement.

CLEP – COLLEGE LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM

Anyone may take CLEP tests to demonstrate college-level competency, and many schools will give college/university credit on the basis of CLEP results. Tests are given every month. Detailed information is available in the Guidance Department. You will need to check with the Admissions Office of the college/university you are planning to attend as to whether or not they will accept CLEP credits. Not all colleges do!

SAT I

The SAT should be taken during your junior year and/or at the beginning of senior year. Students must register online at: **www.collegeboard.com**. SAT Student Registration Bulletins and fee waivers are available in the Guidance Department. Take particular care to fill out the SAT application accurately. The slightest change in how you submit your name, date of birth, and social security number will result in faulty score reporting. Check your admission ticket for any errors. Use the correction form if there is an error on your admission ticket. You must submit a photo ID when registering, and have this ID with you on test day(s).

SAT II- SUBJECT TESTS

Please check to see which SAT IIs are given and when. Many schools require 3 SAT II Tests: English, Math, and one other subject area test.

TOEFL – TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Any foreign-born student whose native language is not English should take the TOEFL. The test is published and administered by the College Board. Testing locations are at nearby colleges in New Jersey. Schools are looking for an English score of 550 or better. **ESL students should take both the SAT and the TOEFL.** Registration forms are available in the Guidance Department.

SENDING SCORES TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

You are entitled to four (4) FREE official score reports, which will be sent directly to the schools you choose by the Educational Testing Service when you take a test. To take advantage of the free score reports, you must name four schools when you register for the SAT. You have until the day you take the test to change the names of the schools on the correction form, which you will mail back to ETS. A request for additional score reports is mailed to you with your admission ticket. Save this form for future use.

SELECTING A SCHOOL

School admissions directors and their committees review the following:

1. High School Academic Record, which includes:
 - Grade point average
 - Class rank
 - SAT, SAT II, ACT, and/or other entrance examinations
 - Standardized Test results
2. School's rating on personality and character
3. Indication of special ability; art, music, or leadership, for example
4. Service to the school and community
5. Extracurricular activities: athletics, dramatics, band, publications, etc.
6. Attendance/discipline records, and personal profile
7. Neatness and accuracy of application
8. Letters of recommendation
9. The personal interview (if required)
10. Portfolio review (Art/Music, for example)

Keep NAVIANCE Profile Up To Date

FACTS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A SCHOOL

COST

- Expenses vary greatly. State schools tend to cost less while private schools tend to be more expensive
- The reported versus the actual cost can also vary greatly
- Cost is not always an indication of quality
- Financial aid is available; the cost factor should not be the only consideration

LOCATION

- Live on or off campus
- Rural, suburban, urban, or “college town”
- Access to transportation

SELECTIVITY

You must be realistic about your choice of a school. Schools publish “profiles” which tell the student what criteria they use and what credentials they are looking for:

- Selectivity is often determined by:
 - GPA/rank
 - SAT/ACT scores
 - Depth of coursework
 - Admission ratio

SIZE

- Very small: fewer than 750 undergraduates
- Small: 750-1,999 undergraduates
- Medium: 2,000-7,499 undergraduates
- Large: 7,500-14,999 undergraduates
- Very Large: 15,000 or more undergraduates

STUDENT BODY MAKE UP

- Exclusively for men
- Exclusively for women
- Co-ed
- Commuter/resident ratio
- In/out of state resident ratio

FINANCIAL AID

Almost anyone can afford to go to college/university or technical school because of the many financial aid programs available. And, the more you need, the more you get. For students needing economic help, the college, the federal, and the state governments are the major sources of aid. Each post-secondary institution has some money earmarked for scholarship assistance in addition to all the government funds which it distributes. However, the primary responsibility for education lies with the family, at least to the extent they can afford to pay.

HOW TO APPLY

1. **FAFSA** – Free Application for Federal Student Aid
 - Only one application is required. The FAFSA should be completed and submitted in early January.
 - Applications should be completed on-line. Electronic signature pin numbers should be obtained before completing the FAFSA on-line. FAFSA forms are also available in the local post office and in the Guidance Department.
2. **FAF** – Financial Aid Form

Required by some schools in addition to the FAFSA. Check with the Financial Aid Office of the school to which you are applying. The College Scholarship Service/Financial Aid Profile brochure is available in the Guidance Department.

A FINANCIAL AID AWARD CANNOT BE MADE UNTIL THE STUDENT IS OFFICIALLY ADMITTED TO A SCHOOL. ALL FINANCIAL INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE SCHOOLS' FINANCIAL AID OFFICES IS COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL. BEFORE SENDING THE FINANCIAL AID FORM, REVIEW IT WITH YOUR COUNSELOR AND MAKE A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS!

HOW FINANCIAL AID WORKS – FEDERAL AND STATE

By filling the FAFSA and the college/university's financial aid application, you become eligible for all of the following:

- The Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
- Pell Grants – Basic Grants (Federal) Scholarship
- The State Tuition Aid Grant Program (TAG)
- The Garden State Scholarship (GSS) which is awarded on the basis of need plus academic achievement
- Distinguished Scholars Program
- SLS - Savings and Loan Scholarship
- Guaranteed part-time employment while at college
- CWSP – College Work Study Program

Based on your need and cost of your education, the college/university prepares a “financial aid package” containing one or more of the above-mentioned grants or loans. You will be notified of the award (if any) by the college/university.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FUND (EOF)

Eligible Students:

- Grant program for educationally and economically disadvantaged students with exceptional financial need
- Full-time students at approved New Jersey colleges (some part-time enrollment permitted)
- Family income limits apply
- Students are admitted into the EOF Program by the college/university
- Campus EOF Programs include summer sessions, tutoring, counseling and developmental courses
- Must be a legal New Jersey resident for at least 12 months

Contact the school you plan on attending for more specific information.

If you think you are eligible for EOF, ask your parents to file their income tax return as early as possible. Be sure they keep copies of the 1040 or 1040A forms.

WRITING COLLEGE ESSAYS



College Essays Serve Three Main Purposes:

1. Essays provide schools with a sample of your academic ability.
2. Essays give schools additional information about your “personality” (likes and dislikes, interests, thought process, creativity, goals, etc.).
3. Essays give you an opportunity to: present a clearer picture of who you are; explain circumstances which may have affected your high school record; influence the admissions process by presenting your strengths, etc.

The Facts:

Tell the admissions officer how you have invested your time: academic interests, sports, extracurricular activities, employment, community involvement, and leadership roles are all of particular interest. If you do not have enough room on the application form, list all of your activities on a separate page and attach it to the initial listing of activities.

Writing the College Essay:

Capitalize on your strengths!

- What do you want them to remember about you?
- What do you have to “offer” the school?
- How does your presence in a group or class add to that group or class?
- What do your family/friends like about you?
- What good things about you would a person just meeting you notice?
- What do you like most about yourself?
- What are you proud of?

Remember that admissions counselors are real people too. They enjoy a laugh. They generally understand about experiences in your lives.

VISITING A COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

Here are questions to ask during an interview (if one is required or recommended):

- When will I know if I am accepted?
- Will I have an Academic Advisor/Faculty Advisor assigned to me?
- What support services are available (such as tutoring)?
- How many roommates will I have, and how are they selected?
- How many meals per week are included in the cost of board?
- What is the school's health program? What does my medical insurance actually cover? Do my parents have to provide additional insurance for me?
- What is the campus like on weekends?
- Is there a placement service to help me find a part-time job, work/study employment, or employment after graduation?

Here are some questions which an admissions counselor may ask you:

- Why would you like to attend our institution?
- What are your hobbies or interests? Why are you pursuing them?
- How do you spend your vacations?
- What do you like or (dislike) about high school, or about specific courses?
- What kind of extracurricular/community activities have you been involved in?

Keep NAVIANCE Profile Up To Date

APPLYING FOR ADMISSION

All applications must be submitted to the Guidance Department at least one month prior to due date!

DO NOT SEND APPLICATIONS DIRECTLY TO SCHOOLS!

1. Application procedures vary from school to school.
 - Read the catalog and application form carefully
 - Follow application instructions and meet all deadlines
 - Applications should be either:
 - *completed on-line, or*
 - *typed, or*
 - *printed neatly in **black ink**.*
 - Prepare a rough copy of any essay and have your English teacher edit your work
2. Most schools will be sent a photocopy of your transcript. Be sure it is correct and up-to-date for courses, grades, and extra curricula activities.
3. Most schools require letters of recommendation letters from individual teachers. Be sure to request these letters in a timely fashion. Request your teachers face to face and also email them through NAVIANCE. Provide teachers with a copy of your **resume or NAVIANCE profile** so that they may include your activities in letters.
4. Two weeks after your request, check with your counselor to see that the letters of recommendation have been submitted. These completed forms are used by your counselor as the backbone for your letter of recommendation.
5. Select your schools carefully. Remember, no more than 4-6 applications are necessary for any student.

YOU ARE REponsible FOR POSTAGE DUE ON ALL APPLICATIONS AND MAILINGS TO COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES. BEFORE GRADUATION, YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED OF THE AMOUNT OWED. THIS BECOMES AN OBLIGATION IF YOU DO NOT PAY, AND YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE YOUR DIPLOMA UNTIL YOU DO SO.

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

OBTAINING AN APPLICATION

It is your responsibility to obtain applications. School addresses, phone numbers, and web sites are available in the Guidance Department.

THE COMMON APPLICATION

This is accepted by many colleges and universities and is available on-line.

APPLICATION FORMS

Admissions applications vary from school to school. The application offers you the best opportunity to present yourself as a prospective student. Even the most routine application form can be turned into a forceful, interesting profile if you are willing to make the effort.

The following are some helpful hints in completing your applications:

- Make a copy of your application before filling it out- (use this copy as a preliminary copy before doing final form)
- Complete applications on-line. Otherwise, type or print legibly in black ink
- Answer all questions completely. Show essays to your English teacher for suggestions and/or corrections
- Make sure your full name and social security number is clearly indicated.
- **Make copies of your applications and keep them on file.**

ON-LINE APPLICATIONS

Most schools prefer that you complete your application on-line. A printed copy of **your on-line application must be given to the Guidance Department** immediately after it is submitted. School records and other pertinent information will not be forwarded unless this is done!

EARLY DECISION/ACTION APPLICATIONS

All application deadlines are your responsibility! Check the deadline dates on the application or in the college catalog.

COMPLETE ALL APPLICATIONS EARLY!

Keep NAVIANCE Profile Up To Date