



COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Winter & Spring 2019

MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATIONAL FINANCING AUTHORITY

About MEFA

- Not-for-profit state authority created in 1982
- Helping families plan, save, and pay for college
- Keeping you on track with college planning:
 - mefa.org: Information, blog, tools, & resources
 - Facebook, Twitter, & LinkedIn**
 - Emails**: Sign up on mefa.org:

Receive tips and updates by e-mail.

- Seminars**: Details at mefa.org/events
- Webinars**: Register at mefa.org/events



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MEFA Pathway *Your Plan for the Future*SM

FREE college and career planning tool

Resources include:

- Skills and interests assessments
- Career exploration
- College search
- Financial aid and scholarship information
- Personalized digital portfolio

mefapathway.org



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Seminar Topics

- Current trends
- Your college list
- Campus visits
- The application process
- Financial aid
- Free resources



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Trends in College Admissions

- Earlier Process
- Students applying to a greater number of schools
- Demonstrated interest a factor
- Admission to public institutions now more competitive
- Has become more a parent-driven process (though students should be driving!)
- Rise of social media
- Globalization: more international students coming to U.S.
- Lack of authentic communication

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Stay Organized!

- Use a system to keep track of applications and deadlines, such as MEFA's College Application Manager:

College Application Manager					
School Name	Admissions Deadline*	Send SAT, ACT, or Neither	Required Financial Aid	Financial Aid Deadline*	Notes
1. Example University	November 1st	SAT	FAFSA <input type="checkbox"/> CSS Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	February 1st	• High school visit: Oct 1st • Strong writing program • A Good #100 Jersey
2.			FAFSA <input type="checkbox"/> CSS Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
3.			FAFSA <input type="checkbox"/> CSS Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
4.			FAFSA <input type="checkbox"/> CSS Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		

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Developing The College List

Research thoroughly

MEFA Pathway College Search: mefapathway.org



College Navigator: CollegeNavigator.gov

-College search with admissions, academic, & cost info

College Scorecard: CollegeScorecard.ed.gov

-College info: avg. net price, student debt, grad rate, & alum salary

Big Future: bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search



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Balancing The College List

Think about "fit" and match the student's needs

- Intended major
- Institution size, location, etc.
- Financial "fit"

College Compare Tool on MEFA Pathway!

- Compare up to 5 colleges side by side
- Select criteria to compare
 - Key Factors
 - Undergraduate Info
 - Academic Info
 - Financial Info

College	Admission	Academic	Financial
College A
College B
College C
College D
College E



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Assess Prospects for Admission

Develop a final list with colleges of each type:

- Probable:** *Your* chances for admission are strong (Make sure at least one is affordable)
- Target:** *Your* chances for admission are 50/50
- Reach:** *Your* chances for admission are less than 50%

Important: Make sure the student would be excited to attend every school on the list



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Informal & Formal Campus Visits

Look beyond the brochures and websites

Informal visits

- Size
- Setting
- Culture

Formal visits

- Academics
- Activities
- Housing
- Q&A



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College Representative Visits & College Fairs

- Take advantage of college rep visits at high school
- College fair tips:
 - Check out the college list beforehand
 - Have a plan of attack before you arrive
 - Head to the info booth first
 - Take advantage of information sessions
 - Check NACACnet.org and NEACAC.org for fairs



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College Application Options

- Regular Decision
- Early Action
- Early Decision
- Rolling Admission
- Open Admission

Deadlines are important! Make sure to stay on track.

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College Application Types & Components

Application requirements may vary at each college

College Application Types:

- Common App
CommonApp.org
- Universal College App
UniversalCollegeApp.com
- Coalition App
CoalitionForCollegeAccess.org
- College website online app
- Paper app

Your application may include:

- Application form
- High school transcript
- Standardized test scores
- Letters of Recommendation
- Activity list or resume
- Personal essay
- Interview
- Audition
- Portfolio



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Academic Readiness

- Rigor
- Good grades vs. challenging classes
- Improvement over time
- Exceeding minimum requirements
- Relevance to college plans
- Sliding scale for MA public colleges & universities



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Standardized Tests

- **PSAT** for practice and assessment
- **SAT** and **ACT** measure college readiness
 - Check with your school counselor for registration dates
 - Both the SAT and ACT offer free test prep online
- **SAT Subject Tests & AP Exams** show subject knowledge
- There are over 1,000 test-optional schools in the U.S. (FairTest.org)



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Activity List/Resume

- Extracurricular activities
- Showcase what you do and the depth of the activity
- Include family responsibilities and employment
- Highlight the impact on your community



Essays

Your application essay says a lot about you

- Share something meaningful and personal
- Start writing early
- Try different topics and approaches
- Plagiarism is taken very seriously
- Leave time for careful proof-reading



2018-19 Common Application Essay Prompts

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Letters of Recommendation

Adults who know you well can offer a helpful perspective on your abilities and strengths

- What are your high school guidelines?
- Whom to ask?
- When to ask?
- Say thank you!



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Interviews

A face-to-face conversation lets colleges see the person behind the numbers

- Two types: 1. Informational and 2. Evaluative
- Be prepared to answer open-ended questions
- Know your reasons for applying to the college
- Ask thoughtful questions
- Cover the basics
- Relax and be yourself

Prep for interviews with tips on mefa.org

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What Happens After you Apply?

- Admitted:** Student is accepted
– Student may also be accepted to begin at a later semester
 - Deferred:** Student is not accepted Early Action/Decision but will be considered in the regular applicant pool
 - Denied:** Student is not accepted
 - Waitlisted:** Student is not yet accepted and may not get accepted off the waitlist
- Most colleges send decisions over email or post to their online portal
•Deposit by May 1st to secure your spot at a school

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Understanding College Affordability

Research costs and financial aid now

- What is the Cost of Attendance and Net Price?
- What financial aid applications are required and when?
- Need-based aid vs. merit-based aid: different deadlines
- Start looking for private scholarships now



Net Price Calculators

- Online tool found on each institution's website
- Asks questions about family finances & student academics
- Provides personal, estimated net college price
- Displays federal & institutional aid
- Merit-based aid may also be calculated



Applying for Financial Aid

•Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®):

- Required by every college and university
- 2020-21 FAFSA: Available Oct 1, 2019
- Will ask about 2018 income

•CSS Profile™:

- Required by 250+ colleges and scholarship agencies
- 2020-21 Profile: Available Oct 1, 2019
- Will ask about 2018 income

•College-specific financial aid applications

- Posted on each college's financial aid website

Financial aid deadlines are so important!



Paying for College in MA: You Have Options

MassTransfer: mass.edu/masstransfer

- **Gen Ed Foundation:**
 - Guaranteed credit transfer from community college to 4-yr public MA school
- **A2B Degree:**
 - Guaranteed credit transfer from community college to 4-yr public MA school
 - No application fee or essay
 - Guaranteed admission and tuition credit based on GPA
- **A2B & Commonwealth Commitment**
 - Guaranteed credit transfer from community college to 4-yr public MA school
 - No application fee or essay
 - Guaranteed admission and tuition credit based on GPA
 - Receive 10% off and then a freeze on tuition & fees if 3.00 GPA maintained

Tuition Break: nebhe.org/programs-overview/rsp-tuitionbreak/overview

- Reduction on out-of-state tuition costs at New England schools
- For programs not offered in your home state



Staying on Track Through Senior Year

Spring/Summer Junior Year

- Research colleges
- Visit campuses & college fairs
- Ask teachers for letters of recommendation
- Take the SAT/ACT
- Start writing the college essay

Fall Senior Year

- Retake the SAT/ACT
- Secure letters of recommendation
- Finalize the college essay(s)
- Attend MEFA's *College Financing* seminar
- Complete all admissions applications
- Submit financial aid applications

Winter Senior Year

- Submit admissions applications
- Submit financial aid applications
- Apply for private scholarships
- Send in mid-year grade reports

Spring Senior Year

- Receive admissions and financial aid offers
- Attend MEFA's *After the College Acceptance* seminar
- Attend college open house programs
- Choose your college by May 1



What You Can Do Now

- Complete the seminar evaluation
- Sign up for MEFA emails →
- Research colleges and plan a campus visit
- Set up a profile at mefapathway.org
- Sign up for webinars at mefa.org/events



Thank You

Questions or Comments?

Presenter name: _____

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