



College Admissions: Where to Start

JCHS College & Career Center
Lana Meskunas



Types of Colleges: 4 Year Colleges

- UA
- AU
- Private
- Out-of-State
- HBCU's

Types of Colleges: 2 Year Colleges

- AL Community Colleges
- Out-of-state community colleges
- Vocational schools

Alabama Higher Education Map

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | B | 2 | 2 |
| 3 | C | 3 | 3 |
| 4 | D | 4 | 4 |
| 5 | E | 5 | 5 |
| | F | | |
| | G | | |
| | H | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | B | 2 | 2 |
| 3 | C | 3 | 3 |
| 4 | D | 4 | 4 |
| 5 | E | 5 | 5 |
| | F | | |
| | G | | |
| | H | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | B | 2 | 2 |
| 3 | C | 3 | 3 |
| 4 | D | 4 | 4 |
| 5 | E | 5 | 5 |
| | F | | |
| | G | | |
| | H | | |

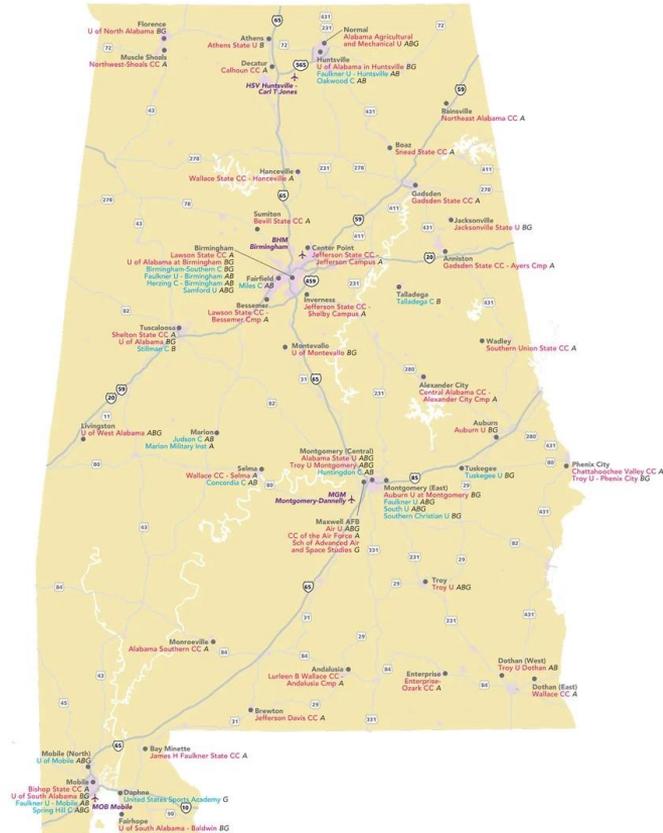
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | B | 2 | 2 |
| 3 | C | 3 | 3 |
| 4 | D | 4 | 4 |
| 5 | E | 5 | 5 |
| | F | | |
| | G | | |
| | H | | |

Key

| | |
|--|--|
| | Limited-access expressways |
| | Toll expressways |
| | Other major highways |
| | Interstate highways |
| | US highways |
| | Major airport |
| | Urban areas |
| | College Town |
| | Public U: Public colleges and universities |
| | Private U: Private colleges and universities |
| | Tribal U: Tribal colleges and universities |
| | A: Associates (arts or sciences) degree offered |
| | B: Bachelors degree offered |
| | G: Graduate (masters or doctoral) degree offered |

Abbreviations:

| | |
|--------|---------------------------------|
| C | College |
| CC | Community College |
| Cmp | Campus |
| Co | County |
| Center | Center |
| C&T | Community and Technical College |
| Inst | Institute |
| Sch | School |
| Sem | Seminary |
| Tech | Technical or Technology |
| Theol | Theological |
| U | University |



©2006 Hedberg Maps, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part, or reuse of this map's data compilation, without permission of the publisher, is prohibited.

To the best of our knowledge, this map includes all colleges in Alabama which are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, as of the beginning of 2006. In addition, we have included all campuses of state college systems that offer complete degree programs (associate of Arts or Associate of Sciences or higher) at their location.

This map is derived from the American Higher Education Map, which is available, along with our other college-related titles, at:

www.uscollegemaps.com

Hedberg Maps, Inc.
1500 Jackson Rd., Suite 314
Monroeville, PA 15113
1.800.753.6277

Choose the College That Fits You

What are your goals?

What are your interests?

What is most important to you?

What do you want to get out of college?



Choose the College That Fits You: Factors to Consider

- Admission requirements
- Size of campus
- Campus life and activities
- Geographic location
- Strength & variety of majors
- Financial costs
- Faculty / student ratio
- Housing availability
- 'Feel' of campus



Think about WHY you want to apply to a specific school!

Creating Your College List



You will want to select schools that fit within these 3 categories:

- **Reach:** The application profile of the average admitted student exceeds yours.
- **Target:** Your application profile falls within the average range for that particular school. You have a very reasonable chance of gaining admission to a target school, but there are no guarantees.
- **Likely:** Your application profile exceeds that of the typical applicant; or you meet the minimum requirements.

Application profile refers to your GPA, standardized test scores, and rank. It may also include level of involvement in extracurriculars.

Creating Your College List

- Visit school websites, check out virtual tours, and look for student videos to learn more about the schools to be able to decide which to apply to.
- Check out social media, clubs at the schools, blogs, etc.
- [How to get to know a college online](#)
- It is recommended to narrow your list down to 6-12 colleges to apply to.
- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/college-101/5-steps-to-creating-a-college-list>



Choose the College That Fits You

Use this worksheet to help you determine what you should be looking for in a college; what values do you want, what type of academic rigor and support do you need, what qualities do you want, etc.

[College Planning Values Assessment Activity](#)

College and Career Search

College Search Websites:

- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>
- <https://www.appily.com/colleges>

Career Information:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/home.htm>
- O*NET: <https://www.onetonline.org/>

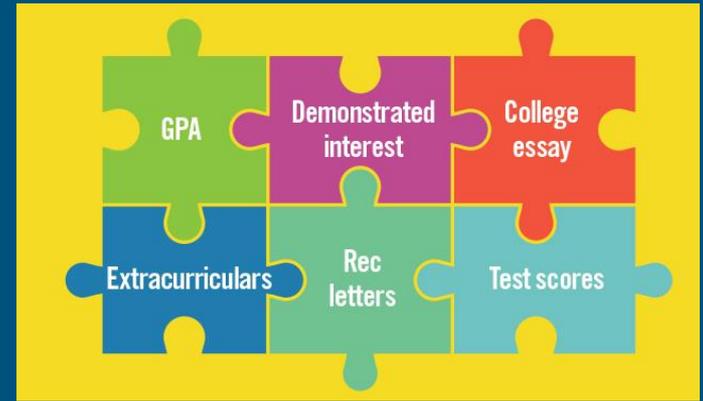




What do you need to apply?

- **Transcripts:** Refer to them as you fill out the application to ensure the information you enter is accurate.
- **Test scores:** ACT or SAT (with writing). SAT Subject Tests or Advanced Placement exams if applicable.
- **List of Extracurricular activities:** Community service, clubs, sports, outside activities, responsibilities at home, leadership experience, etc.
- **List of Honors / Awards:** Honors or awards you have received during high school (from school or outside of school)
- **Personal Statement**
- **Essay**
- **Annual income for last year and the current year** (your parents' if you're a dependent; your income if you're independent): This is optional unless you're applying for an application fee waiver.
- **Social Security number, if you have one.** We use this to match your application to things like your test score report, final transcript(s) and, if you're applying for financial aid, your Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
- **Payment:** Credit card information to pay the application fees. If you prefer to pay by check, you can mail your payment. If you are need assistance and want to mail in a fee waiver application, select pay be check.

How to Apply?



- Complete applications online!
- Send your transcript to the college using the JCHS online portal:
<https://madisoncityal.scriborder.com/>
- Have your ACT or SAT score sent to the college directly from your ACT or SAT account. JCHS does not send test scores.
- If applicable, fill out merit-based college scholarships.

DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST *SUITS YOU?*

| Regular Decision | Rolling Admission | Early Action (EA) | Early Decision (ED) | Restrictive Early Action (REA) |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| <p>DEFINITION:</p> <p>Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.</p> | <p>DEFINITION:</p> <p>Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.</p> | <p>DEFINITION:</p> <p>Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.</p> | <p>DEFINITION:</p> <p>Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll and withdraw all other applications. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.</p> | <p>DEFINITION:</p> <p>Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.</p> |
| <p>COMMITMENT:</p> <p>NON-BINDING</p> | <p>COMMITMENT:</p> <p>NON-BINDING</p> | <p>COMMITMENT:</p> <p>NON-BINDING</p> | <p>COMMITMENT:</p> <p>BINDING</p> | <p>COMMITMENT:</p> <p>NON-BINDING</p> |
| <p>Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.</p> | | | <p>Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions.</p> | |

Fee Waivers

- Must meet specific requirements related to your family income and size
- SAT fee waiver info:
 - collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/fees/fee-waivers
 - SAT fee waiver allows for 2 SAT tests, 2 SAT Subject Test sittings (up to 3 tests per sitting), unlimited free score sends, and 4 college application fee waivers
- ACT fee waiver info:
 - www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration/fees.html
 - ACT fee waiver allows for 1 ACT test and 20 free score sends; students may receive 2 fee waivers
- Check private colleges individually for possible application fee waivers. Request an application fee waiver through common app.

Tips & Recommendations

- Use a separate email from your personal and school accounts, just for college, scholarships, etc (maybe for job applications too!)
 - Professional account such as just your name, maybe has a number in it
 - Use google so that you will have a google drive associated with it
- Use the google drive to store all college related docs (Drafts of essays, tracking sheets, etc)
- Create accounts and keep your usernames in a tracking sheet.

Tips & Recommendations

- Keep a list of extracurricular activities
- Start your brag sheet for Mrs. Meskunas (College Counselor) if you think you will need a counselor's letter of recommendation.
<https://www.madisoncity.k12.al.us/Page/3138>
 - Will be used by counselor for school report for letter of recommendation but can also help you prepare for personal statement and activities section of application
- Work on personal statement/personal insight questions
<https://appsupport.commonapp.org/applicantsupport/s/article/What-are-the-2024-25-Common-App-essay-prompts> in Google Docs and then copy and paste into applications.
- Request letters of recommendation for schools that require them - end of Junior year, beginning of Senior year.

What seniors should be doing

- Add to, review, and finalize your resume.
- Finalize your college essay if needed.
- Make note of all deadlines for admissions and financial aid.
- Set up a meeting with Mrs. Meskunas if you have questions.
- Review recommendations and ask for additional ones if necessary.
- Take SAT or ACT one more time, if needed.
- **Complete college applications (Sept. – Dec.).**
- **Send official transcripts (JCHS Homepage)**
- **Send SAT/ACT scores to colleges (actstudent.org or sat.collegeboard.org)**
- Gather information needed for FAFSA and CSS profile (selective colleges)
- Fill out FAFSA (available Dec.).
- Apply for local scholarships (all year).
- Take necessary AP exams.
- Notify colleges of your decision to accept or decline their offer (May).
- Accept or decline financial aid/scholarships from the college you plan to attend.

What juniors should be doing?

- Check your GPA, transcript and rank for accuracy
- **Take the PSAT/NMSQT**
- Begin the process of applying to any of the Military Academies, if applicable
- Write a first draft of your resume (fall)
- Take the SAT and/or the ACT (winter or spring)
- Register with the NCAA clearing house as a recruitable athlete, if applicable
- Request admissions information from colleges and universities
- Visit colleges, either in person or online
- Clean up your social media presence.
- Make sure you graduate on time by fulfilling all district requirements
- Gather any college admissions specific information such as your art or music portfolio, athletic game tapes, or tests.
- Ask teachers, coaches, employers, or other adults for recommendations.

What freshman and sophomores should be doing?

Freshman

- Finalize your 4 year plan.
- Get to know your counselor.
- Know your course descriptions.
- Monitor your grades.
- Explore the extracurricular and community organizations open to you.
- If interested, join JROTC.
- Investigate community service opportunities. Keep track of your hours.
- Start thinking about college and what you would like to gain from college.
- Visit colleges during weekends or breaks.

Sophomore

- Check your GPA.
- Finalize your 4 year plan.
- Enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) courses where possible.
- Take the PSAT.
- Prepare for SAT/ACT.
- Military academy? Start planning now.
- Investigate careers.
- Think about what type of college you would like to attend.
- Visit colleges during weekends or breaks.
- Consider community colleges.
- Prepare for college application fees and exam fees.

Scholarships

Where to look:

- College or University's website
- James Clemens High School's Website (Academics – Guidance – College Scholarships)
- Follow JLV College Counseling
- Use scholarship search engines such as Fastweb.com or GoingMerry.com
- Ask people in your community. Certain banks, doctors, law firms, businesses, and organizations offer scholarship opportunities.

Resources

- <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/how-to-choose-a-college>
- <https://www.educationcorner.com/factors-choosing-a-college.html>
- https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/slideshows/10-steps-to-picking-the-right-school?itm_source=parsely-api&slide=2
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kristenmoon/2019/10/03/the-strategy-behind-building-your-college-lists/#3dd3fbf5c779>
- <https://blog.prepscholar.com/target-school-how-to-find-yours>
- <https://blog.prepscholar.com/what-college-should-i-go-to-how-to-choose-a-college>
- <https://admissions.tufts.edu/blogs/inside-admissions/post/when-you-can-t-visit-campus-how-to-get-to-know-a-college-online/>

