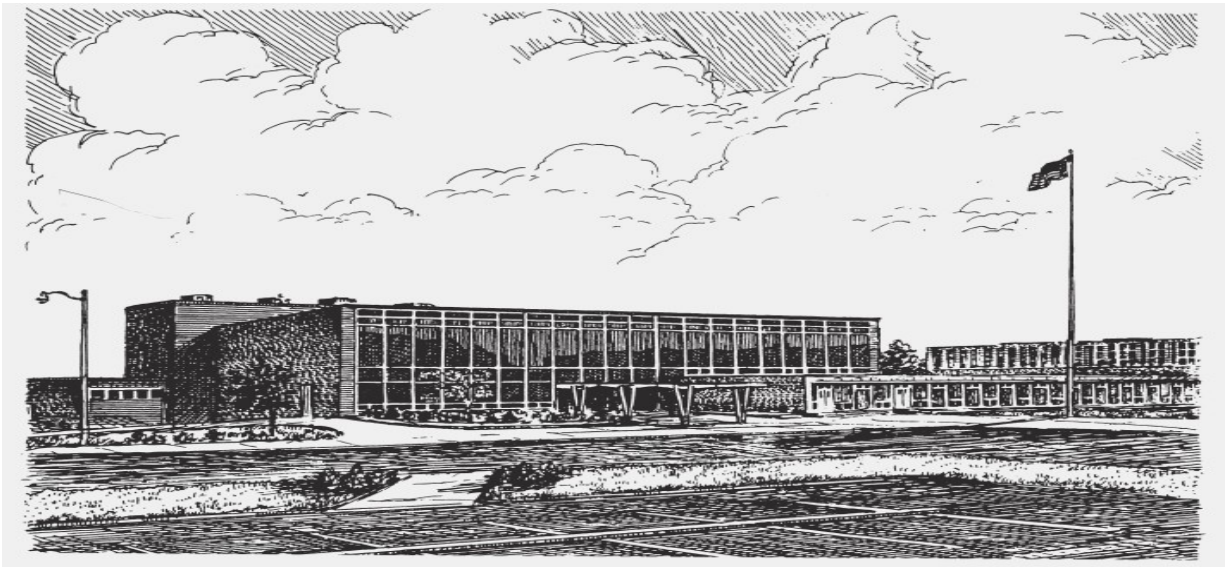


# ABINGTON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF COLLEGE BOUND STUDENTS 2010-2011

*The Abington Senior High School Guidance Department is pleased to offer parents a summary of valuable information regarding the college search and application process. This booklet is designed to give you the basic information you need to guide and advise your children as they prepare to enroll in college. It is not designed to provide the answers to all questions or to address the needs of all students. For answers to individual questions, or for personalized advice, talk to your son or daughter's guidance counselor. A guidance counselor is an excellent resource and only a phone call away.*



Compiled by members of the Abington Senior High School Guidance Department

## CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
1. <i>A Chronology for College Admissions</i>	3
2. <i>What is Naviance?</i>	6
3. <i>Establishing Your College Preferences</i>	7
4. <i>Admissions Options</i>	9
5. <i>The Campus Visit</i>	10
6. <i>The College Interview</i>	12
7. <i>Description of Admissions Policies</i>	14
8. <i>Admissions Statistics from the Class of 2009</i>	15
9. <i>Admission and Testing Vocabulary</i>	17
10. <i>Financial Aid and Scholarship Information</i>	19
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
A. <i>Summary of College Planning</i>	23
B. <i>Important Dates to Remember</i>	24
C. <i>NCAA Requirements</i>	25
D. <i>References</i>	27
E. <i>Web Resources</i>	28

## **SECTION 1: A CHRONOLOGY FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS AND EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS**

*Counselors meet with students throughout their high school career and address any needs or concerns related to their educational progress. The Guidance Department further supports college admission goals by conducting evening seminars for parents and students of the Abington School District. The topics range from “College Admissions: An Overview”, “Testing: PSAT, SAT, ACT” to “The Financial Aid Process”. Consult your district calendar or child’s Guidance Counselor for the dates of these presentations.*

### **GRADE NINE:**

This year marks the beginning of your child’s academic profile for college admission. This is the time to begin developing your child’s “brag sheet”. The guidance team recommends that you begin to collect information relative to your child’s activities, academic honors, work experience, and other accomplishments. Keep track of these now so you do not forget any of your child’s activities or accomplishments when it comes time to apply to college.

#### *First Semester*

- Closely monitor your child’s progress in college preparatory or honors classes.
- Contact the Guidance Counselor to assess your child’s progress. Maintain contact with teachers if you are concerned about a specific course or courses.
- Encourage your child’s involvement in personal, school, and community activities. The activities should represent your child’s interests and be a guide to future plans.

#### *Second Semester*

- Work with the Guidance Counselor to plan your child’s 10<sup>th</sup> grade schedule and determine whether your child would be more successful in honors classes or the college preparatory curriculum.
- SAT Subject tests should be taken at the completion of the course. Typically only biology, if any, SAT Subject tests are taken at the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Investigate summer programs; such as, camp, work, pre-college programs, community service, etc.
- Encourage your child to read over the summer. Books may be recommended by any academic department.

Your child should continue to strive for a challenging curriculum that promotes intellectual curiosity. Your child should continue to build the “brag sheet”, including all activities, whether in or out of school. Remember that consistency and quality, not quantity, are what counts.

### **GRADE TEN:**

#### *First Semester*

- Ensure that you have access to your child’s Progress Book account. All teacher emails are available through this program. You will also be able to follow your child’s academic progress throughout each marking period.
- Your child will take the PSAT in October. This is strictly for practice purposes. Encourage your child to study the review materials presented in class.
- Maintain contact with your child’s Guidance Counselor and teachers. They can serve as consultants for ways to improve performance, if necessary.
- PSAT score reports will be issued in December. Guidance Counselors will conduct classroom presentations on how to read and understand the score reports.

- Your child will be introduced to the Naviance Success Program, which you and your child can utilize to explore college and career searches.
- Ensure that your child is prepared for mid-term examinations administered the last week of the semester. These exams will count as a percentage of both the semester and the final grades.

### *Second Semester*

- Maintain contact with your child's Guidance Counselor regarding academic progress.
- Consider college visits and attend local college fairs. Abington Senior High School sponsors a college/career fair in April.
- Your child can search preliminary college and career information in Naviance.
- Counselors will meet with your child to plan an appropriate schedule for 11<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Determine with your child's Guidance Counselor whether your child should take SAT Subject Tests at the conclusion of the school year.
- Explore summer programs that tap into your child's possible college major and/or career interests.
- Encourage summer reading. You can ask your child's teachers for suggestions.

### **GRADE ELEVEN:**

This is the year that college planning activities seriously begin. Take advantage of all college admissions activities and services offered by the high school and the community. Update the "brag sheet" and format it in resume style.

### *First Semester*

- The PSAT will be administered in October. This will not only be a practice SAT but your child may qualify for a National Merit Scholarship. Encourage your child to study the review materials presented in class.
- PSAT score reports will be issued in December. Guidance Counselors will again conduct classroom presentations on how to read and understand the score report. Your child will get a copy of the score report to bring home and review with you.
- Consult with your child's Guidance Counselor about potential SAT tutoring programs if you deem them necessary.
- Your child should prepare a list of prospective colleges to review with the Guidance Counselor in the spring.
- Continue exploratory college visits and encourage your child to attend the informational college sessions at the high school.
- Formulate, in consultation with your child's Guidance Counselor, a timeline for SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests and/or AP Examinations.
- Ensure that your child has registered for either the SAT ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)) or ACT ([www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)) in the spring semester.
- Make sure that your child prepares for mid-term examinations as they are factored into first semester and final grades.
- Maintain contact with your child's Guidance Counselor regarding academic progress.

### *Second Semester*

- Ensure that your child takes the SAT or ACT at least twice by the conclusion of 11<sup>th</sup> Grade.

- Counselors will meet with your child to discuss college choices and build a college profile which will be accessible through Naviance. If you would like to participate in this meeting, please contact your child's Guidance Counselor to schedule a time.
- Organize any information or mail your child receives especially if the information is for a school of potential interest. Colleges may send literature as a result of your child's PSAT scores and National College Search via the SAT program.
- Determine if your child is prepared to take SAT Subject Tests and/or AP Examinations at the conclusion of this school year.
- Maintain contact with your child's teachers and Guidance Counselor regarding academic progress.

### *Summer*

- Help your child prepare videotapes, audiotapes, art portfolios, and resumes, if appropriate.
- Request information from colleges of interest and make college visits.
- Explore the common application online ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)) and begin drafting college essays. The most recent common application is usually available in late July – August.
- Assess whether your child will benefit from taking the SAT or ACT one more time during **senior** year.
- Determine which, if any, SAT Subject Tests are required for admissions. Inquire whether the college will accept the ACT with Writing in place of the SAT and SAT Subject Tests.

### **GRADE TWELVE:**

Three excused college visit days are reserved for seniors. See your Guidance Counselor for appropriate permission forms, which must be submitted prior to the day of the visit. Provide your Guidance Counselor with a final list of colleges and consult with your counselor about application deadlines. Complete the resume.

### *September – October*

- Register for the fall SAT, ACT, or SAT Subject tests, if needed.
- Encourage your child to ask two academic teachers for recommendations (preferably 11<sup>th</sup> grade teachers). Your child may also ask a coach, group sponsor, religious leader, etc. Your child's Guidance Counselor will also provide a letter of recommendation.
- Prepare and send applications to colleges with rolling admissions.
- Prepare and mail Early Decision or Early Action applications, if appropriate. If your child plans to apply early, you and your child should visit and interview at that school beforehand.
- Ensure that your child has submitted all required materials to the Guidance Counselor:
  - o An envelope with three stamps addressed to the admissions office of each school, with no return address.
  - o Activity sheet or resume.
  - o Transcript release form with colleges listed and a parent/guardian signature.
  - o Any Secondary School Report/Guidance Counselor forms.
- Watch application deadlines for all of the schools to which your child is applying. It is better to have all materials submitted prior to the deadline than to be rushing against it.
- Determine whether the colleges to which your child is applying accept SAT and ACT scores recorded on the high school transcript or whether the scores must be sent directly from the Test Center.
- Complete CSS Profile (financial aid form) for select colleges/universities that require it.
- Encourage your child to attend college recruiting visits at the high school.
- Continue to monitor your child's academic progress as many colleges request mid-year grades.
- Maintain contact with your child's Guidance Counselor if you have any questions regarding the process and continue to utilize Naviance to track your child's college applications.

### *November – December*

- Finish sending all materials to the Guidance Office so that applications are filed before the deadlines. Most deadlines will be early to mid-January.
- Early Decision and Early Action deadlines are typically November 15 – be sure to complete the application prior to this deadline.
- Check the priority deadlines for schools with rolling admission. It is better to have your applications submitted prior to the deadlines so you are considered among the first batch of students.
- Students who apply Early Decision or Early Action usually receive a reply by mid-December. If your child is accepted Early Decision, all other applications must be withdrawn as this is a binding contract. Early Action acceptances are not binding so your child may wait for decisions from other schools.
- Begin to gather materials for financial aid forms, such as the FAFSA. See [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) for more information.

### *January – February*

- Last call for college applications. Be sure your child has submitted all the required materials and followed up with the schools to ensure their receipt.
- File the Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA – [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)), whether or not you are seeking financial aid – it is better to have this form completed.
- If your child's school requires mid-year grades, your child should give the counselor an envelope addressed to the admissions office of each college with one stamp and no return address. Include any forms requested with the mid-year grades.
- Search for scholarships through Naviance or online by accessing different websites; such as, [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com).  
Have your child visit a friend for the weekend at college. This will allow your child to get a feel for not only the academic aspect of college, but also the social aspect which is very important.

### *March – April*

- Notifications from Regular Decision applications arrive.
- Mail a confirmation check to only one college by May 1, the national notification deadline.
- Complete the required paperwork for enrollment, including room and board options. The earlier you complete this process the greater chance of getting first choice for dorms, etc.

### *May*

- AP Examinations are administered. Determine whether or not your child should take them. Ask the admissions office at your college what scores are required to receive AP credit.

### *June*

- Complete the high school senior survey. This form provides information on college matriculation and scholarship winnings at the high school.
- Colleges require a final transcript. To send your final transcript, give your Guidance Counselor an envelope with one stamp addressed to the admission office, with no return address.
- Congratulations! Enjoy the summer with your child and prepare for departure to college in the fall.

## **SECTION 2: WHAT IS NAVIANCE?**

Naviance is a state-of-the-art college and career planning program. Students are encouraged to access the website throughout their high school careers so they can play an active role in their post-secondary planning. Within Naviance, students have the ability to explore a variety of programs, including, but not limited to, college searches and career exploration. There are over 3700 schools inputted in Naviance, as well as every conceivable occupation. In addition, students are able to build their resumes through Naviance, complete a personality test to learn more about themselves and their learning styles, and explore an interest inventory which can help lead to a potential college major or career path in the future.

At the completion of every semester, the student's GPA is updated in Naviance. This allows students to follow their progress and compare themselves to other students who have applied to certain schools within the past few years. A feature, known as "Scattergram," will plot your child on a graph based on GPA and SAT or PSAT scores. This will allow students to view the accepted average for schools to which other Abington High School students have applied. In addition, students should enter their email address into their Naviance account. This allows the Guidance Department to contact students with information regarding post-secondary planning, including upcoming SAT registration deadlines, college visitation dates, etc. Please ensure that your child checks email regularly. For more information regarding Naviance, contact your child's Guidance Counselor.

To access the website, go to the following address:

<https://connection.naviance.com/ashs>

You can also access this web address through the Senior High website. Under Academics, click Guidance and the link is there.

Both the email and the password should be set as your child's 5-digit student ID number (6-digits if it begins with a "5"). If you have any trouble signing onto the website, please do not hesitate to call the Guidance Office.

### **SECTION 3: ESTABLISHING YOUR COLLEGE PREFERENCES**

There are about 3,000 colleges in the United States. If you keep your thinking flexible, you will be able to find a few that would be good choices for you. The following list of criteria can serve as a basis for comparison as you begin to organize your thinking about college. With Naviance you can also perform college searches based on a large portion of these criteria.

**LOCATION** – Where do you want to be in the United States? Do you want to stay close to home? Do you want to be in a warm climate or a cold climate? Is the East Coast for you, or would you rather branch out and move West? Do you want to be in a city or a suburb? These are questions to consider when making your list of potential colleges. You are not only selecting a school, but also a place to live for at least the next four years. Also, weigh the cost of transportation to and from college.

**SIZE** – Abington Senior High School has approximately 2,000 students. Would you like to be in a school that is about the same size as Abington, bigger, or smaller? Large schools typically have more diverse courses, students, and activities. Most large universities are divided into smaller colleges based on different majors. Small schools typically have smaller classes (fewer large lectures) taught by professors, not graduate students, as is sometimes the case at large universities.

**AVERAGE CLASS SIZE** – When choosing a college, think about what size classes you would like. At larger schools, you are more likely to have freshman lectures with hundreds of students. At smaller colleges and universities, your classes will be similar to your high school classes. In these, you will have the opportunity to get to know your professors better and have more one-on-one attention. In the larger lectures, you will

have to introduce yourself to your professor and schedule time to meet if you need additional help. Classes at large universities tend to decrease in size as you enter the core curriculum of your major.

**FACULTY** – It is important to determine the percentage of Ph.D.'s (and the universities which granted them) on the faculty. Quality colleges usually have above 75%. If a college falls below 50%, make certain there are sufficient compensatory qualities.

**RETENTION** – Check on the percentage of freshmen who return the following year. The best schools have a higher retention rate.

**GRADUATION RATES** – Inquire about the percentage of students who graduate. How long does it usually take to graduate, four, five, six years?

**COURSES** – Determine what courses are required of all students, including the general education courses. Be sure that there is a range of opportunities for specialization and choice of major. You do not want to take courses in one major and not be able to switch into another because you have found that your first choice was not for you. On average, students will change their major at least once throughout college. There should be flexibility to do this. Also, check whether your college has special programs which may interest you, such as R.O.T.C. or study abroad.

**CURRICULUM** – Is there a core curriculum for students in your program? Generally, students will enter the core curriculum when they begin their junior year of college. This allows students to become more focused on a specific area of study. Inquire how much freedom you have in choosing courses once you enter your core curriculum.

**ACCREDITATION** – This is especially important if you are planning to enter a field such as nursing or medical technology. Be particularly careful that the program you choose is accredited and has state certification.

**HOUSING** – Consider the type of housing available. Are students able to live on campus all four years of school? Is off-campus housing easy to obtain? How many freshmen are guaranteed campus housing? How far are the freshmen dorms from the academic buildings? Are there different styles of housing (i.e. apartment style, suite style, typical dorms, etc.)? It is important to consider these questions when choosing a college. You want to ensure that you will be comfortable in your living quarters and that you can be successful in the environment provided for you.

**NATURE OF STUDENT BODY AND SOCIAL LIFE** – College is more than just going to classes. At its best, it is living in an academic community and learning to participate in a whole range of intellectual, social, athletic, and religious activities. It is an opportunity for students to mature and become independent, as they are living on their own quite often for the first time. Do the schools to which you are applying offer activities of interest to you? Do you want a school with a big football team? Is Greek life important to you? Do you want to be a part of the school newspaper? These are aspects of your daily life in college and, therefore, important considerations.

In addition, take into account the geographic composition of the student body. Is the college a regional one attracting students from the same state or region, or does the school attract students from all over the U.S. and world? What percentage of students are minorities and how does the school handle race relations? Watch out for the "suitcase" college where everyone disappears over the weekends. Some colleges are regional in their student body and students will tend to travel home every Friday-Sunday. There is nothing wrong with this, but the weekend social scene may be very different from a school that draws students from all over the country.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE** – What is the cost, including tuition, fees, room and board, books, transportation and travel to and from campus, and pocket money? If you really want to go to college, don't let cost stop

you. Remember that college is an investment and you can obtain funds from several sources. You can work during vacations, you can seek a job on or near campus, and, if you meet the requirement for financial need, you can apply for a scholarship from your college. You can also obtain low interest loans from the State or Federal Government. Most colleges have a Financial Aid Office in addition to the Admissions Office. In seeking aid be sure to contact both.

**GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS** – If you know that you want to go to graduate school, ascertain the college’s record for placement of its graduates in business, graduate, and professional schools. Does the school offer these programs? Many schools will have undergraduate and graduate degrees coordinated with one another, so you can complete your four years of undergraduate education and move right into a fifth year at the same campus to obtain a graduate degree.

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT** – Does the school accept Advanced Placement credits? What score is required to obtain credit? Does the school offer sophomore standing or more in-depth courses while retaining freshman status? Weigh these questions before taking AP Examinations.

**HONORS PROGRAM** – Does the school have an Honors Program? What are the requirements for admission into an Honors Program? What are the benefits of taking such a program? Am I able to switch into the Honors Program if I maintain a certain GPA?

**CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE** – Most colleges have a career development office. Is this office at your school effective and easy to access? Inquire about the role of the career development office and what opportunities are available. Are there career fairs more than once a year? What companies typically recruit on campus? Are students able to secure internships related to their career of choice while still in college? What percentage of graduates goes directly into the marketplace? These questions are extremely important, especially if you plan to go into a competitive field of work in the future.

**COMPUTERS** – How many computer labs are there on campus? Is the campus wireless? Are specific types of computers preferred? Is specific software recommended? If you have computer problems, are technicians easily accessible?

#### **SECTION 4: ADMISSIONS OPTIONS**

Schools vary widely as to application deadlines. Some colleges have a fixed deadline, such as January 1. These colleges will not consider any application until that date, even if they receive all required materials months in advance. Others have a window during which applications can be received and reviewed. For example, a school may have a priority deadline of November 30. Applications received by this date will be reviewed and students will be notified of the results early in the admissions process. If students send their applications following this date, they will be considered at the traditional deadline, typically in January. It is extremely important to review the literature you receive from colleges very carefully. Don’t depend only on guidebooks as college policy may change. It never hurts to submit an application well in advance of a deadline since colleges may fill spaces in advance of posted deadlines.

##### **Early Decision**

Several hundred colleges offer Early Decision plans in which the student applies to a college by a certain fixed date (early to mid-November) and receives a reply within four to six weeks. Be certain all information is submitted before the deadline for early admission to ensure your consideration. By mid-December, applicants who exercise this option will have learned whether their school of choice admitted, denied or deferred them. If admitted, the student must withdraw all other applications. By applying Early Decision, the student commits to enrolling at that particular school, if admitted. This is a binding contract.

The student who is denied Early Decision must set new sights. Unfortunately, the denied students will not have another opportunity to be accepted into that institution. Students who are deferred, however, will be re-evaluated during the regular admissions cycle; that is, along with the students who have applied for the regular deadline. There is no guarantee that a student will be accepted during the regular admissions process, but at least it is another opportunity to have your candidacy reviewed by the admissions committee. It may benefit a deferred student to contact the admissions office to inquire whether anything further can be done prior to the regular admissions deadline; such as, taking the SAT or ACT one more time or sending mid-year grades. Although students may be considered for admission a second time, the odds are generally not favorable for a student who is deferred.

### **Early Action**

Early Action or early notification plans require students apply by an earlier date, again typically in early to mid-November. Unlike Early Decision, however, students accepted through Early Action admissions are not required to withdraw all other applications. Students will be informed of the admissions decision by mid-December, but may wait for the decisions from other schools before making a commitment to an Early Action school. Colleges offer the Early Action plan to enable students who have a first choice of school to complete the application process earlier and with greater simplicity. Early Action benefits both students and colleges. Students who receive an early offer tend to apply to fewer colleges, which in turn, saves money on application fees. It also takes pressure off students knowing that they have been admitted to at least one school in early senior year.

### **Single-Choice Early Action**

Single-Choice Early Action is another early action plan that some schools have adopted. This means that you can apply early only to one school offering an early admissions option. For example, students applying Early Action to Harvard University cannot apply early to any other college or university. The student can, however, still apply to other schools under the regular admissions deadline. The Single-Choice Early Action is not binding and students may wait to hear from other schools before committing to that school. The goal of this policy is to indicate to the college that it is the student's first choice without locking the student into an acceptance.

### **Rolling Admissions**

Many state universities and less selective private colleges operate under a rolling admission or rolling decision policy. A few weeks after receiving the student's application and supporting materials, the admissions staff takes action on the student's candidacy. Colleges that employ this plan also set priority deadlines for financial aid and housing. Admissions decisions in the early round are either admit or defer. In the latter case, the college will review the candidacy again when more students have applied, usually after the final application deadline, to get a fuller picture as to how the student competes in the overall applicant pool. For rolling admissions schools, the earlier a student submits all the required application materials, the better. Students who apply to rolling admissions schools will know rather early in their senior year if they have been accepted.

### **Open Admissions**

Many smaller state colleges, both two and four year, operate under an open admissions policy. Generally, there are no cut off dates for applying and students are admitted on the basis of minimum requirements; such as, having a high school diploma.

*There is no denying that there could be advantages to applying early – the numbers reveal this – but only if you and your child believe that this is the best option. From an admissions perspective, there is an expectation that students who apply early are better organized, more self-confident, mature, and in touch with their personal goals. It is also expected that students who apply Early Decision have done their absolute best academically. These students are typically at the top of their class. They have not only performed well in school, but they have been involved in activities both in and out of school. They also, very often, have proven themselves to be leaders in the school and surrounding community.*

*When the first two years of high school are somewhat uneven academically, many colleges look at whether the first term of the senior year is consistent with any improvement shown in the junior year. Colleges watch for slacking off in senior year.*

*If any doubts persist about applying early (money, location, distance from home, etc.), then the answer is easy – it is better to pursue another admission option. The only doubt should be, “Will I get in?” The student who is contemplating applying early should be able to state with confidence that the college rises above all others. Applying Early Decision is a binding decision. If there are any doubts, the student may be better off applying Early Action or regular admissions.*

## **SECTION 5: THE CAMPUS VISIT**

Much of the information in Section 5: The Campus Visit and Section 6: The College Interview is taken from the College Board Online (*College Board, 2010*). The website, [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), provides you with information regarding the entire college admissions process from start to finish. This is an excellent resource in addition to Naviance.

### **When to go:**

Although there is no specific time you should visit a college, the best time to get a feel for the college experience is when school is in session. This will give both you and your child a chance to view what day-to-day life is like at a specific college. It will also allow you to speak with students who are currently enrolled. It is important to consider your child’s high school schedule when planning your visits as you do not want your child to miss classes or tests that may affect grades. Look for long weekends that the high school may have scheduled which would allow you and your child to visit a college campus on a weekday afternoon while college classes are still in session.

There is no definite year in high school that you and your child should start exploring college campuses. In fact, earlier is better. This will allow your child to get a feel of what to expect at college and comparing campuses will help narrow your child’s list of potential schools. At the end of junior year and the beginning of senior year, you may want to step up your visits. At this point, your child should have a specific list of schools that will narrow the search and visitation schedule.

You may also want to allow your child to visit with a friend or family member on campus for a weekend during the school year. It is important that your child finds a comfortable social environment in addition to an academic environment. A visit such as this will enable your child to get a feel for college life, apart from attending classes and walking around the campus on a traditional college tour.

### **Prior to the visit:**

Before you go on campus tours, which are generally scheduled Mondays-Fridays whenever school is in session, you and your child should research the college. Make sure that your child is actually interested in the school. Your best bet is to utilize Naviance, college guides, course catalogs, and any other relevant

resources. Determine whether the college offers what your child seeks in a major. If your child is uncertain about a city or suburban/rural school, visit both types. The school's individual website is also an excellent resource.

Ask the school's admissions office if you need to schedule a college tour in advance. Find out if the tour is one-on-one or with a group. Ask if there will be an opportunity to talk to currently enrolled students. Also, inquire where you will be meeting and where you should park so you are not wasting quality time when you arrive on the campus. It may benefit you to give yourself extra time to explore the campus after the formal tour. In addition, inquire whether an interview is necessary. If so, you want to ensure that your child is prepared with questions and is knowledgeable about the school.

### **The campus tour:**

There are a few buildings you always want to visit on the campus tour. These include a dorm, the library, and at least one academic building. The tour guides will most likely take you through the entire campus so be sure to wear comfortable shoes as some college campuses are sprawling. There will probably be an information session either before or after the tour so if you have any questions, address them here.

Along with the formal college tour, keep the following in mind when you visit each campus.

- Take time to talk to the admissions counselor; inquire about financial aid and any other questions you may have. Ask for the counselor's business card in the event you have questions in the future.
- Look for the academic advising and financial aid offices.
- Take note of the condition and maintenance of the buildings and grounds. Construction is a positive sign as it shows that money is being reinvested.
- Go into the cafeteria and walk through the student union. Try the food if you have the chance. This will give both you and your child a more realistic idea of what to expect of everyday life on a college campus.
- Explore the career development center.
- Check the location of the health center and whether it is easily accessible.
- If your child is interested in studying abroad, inquire whether there is a specific office.
- If there is a town or a city nearby, take time to walk around there as well so you will know what is available off the college campus.

Talk to each other and be open about what you like or dislike about the school. You want to be sure that your child will be happy there so make sure that the school has everything your child wants. It never hurts to go into the school's bookstore and buy a souvenir or item of clothing before you leave!

## **SECTION 6: THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW**

A college interview offers students an opportunity for an exchange of information with an admissions officer. For the student, an interview offers a chance to highlight individual strengths and interests and to gather additional information about the college. For the admissions officer, it is a way to get to know the student and add to the personal and academic information that comprises an application.

### **Types of Interviews:**

1. *Admissions officers* – this is a meeting scheduled with a staff member in the college admissions office. This will give your child the opportunity to talk to the admissions officer on a one-on-one basis, allowing the admissions staff to get a more holistic view of the student.

2. *Student interview* – although students who attend the college are not typically a part of the admissions process, notes from conversations they have with your child may be stored in your child’s application file. These may be reviewed later on when making admissions decisions.
3. *Alumni interview* – this type of interview will be scheduled after your child has completed the application process. An alumnus will interview your child. The interview may be on or off campus, but location holds no weight in a decision.
4. *Group interview* – this is a more informal interview in which an admissions officer will meet with a group of people, possibly following a campus tour. It is more like a question and answer session.
5. *High school visits* – very often, high schools will host college representatives who will make a presentation to the students. Your child should meet the college representative of the schools that interest your child.
6. *Auditions* – if your child is planning to specialize in a specific type of music, drama, or dance, many schools will ask your child to audition in addition to completing the application. Auditions are held on specific dates. Art schools will most likely want to see a portfolio. Be sure to inquire about the requirements for each individual school, as each one is different.

### **Are Interviews Required?**

An interview may be required, recommended or optional. It will not be the end-all, be-all to your child’s application. The interview gives your child the opportunity to meet a member of the admissions staff and it gives the admissions staff the opportunity to get a better sense of your child beyond the paper application. Each college’s policy on interviews is usually stated in the admissions information that is sent to a prospective applicant. A record of the interview will be placed in your child’s file. Very often an interview will benefit your child if the admissions committee is choosing between two students with similar credentials. This will give your child a possible edge over another student who has not interviewed with an admissions officer.

If your child is planning to interview at a number of different schools, it would be well to interview at a “safety” school first. This will reduce anxiety as your child embarks on interviews with some of the more competitive and selective colleges.

### **Interview Topics:**

There is no prescribed format for an interview. Timing and style vary according to the institution and the interviewer. In addition, the issues discussed during an interview may vary considerably from one interview to the next. Some broad topics that may be covered are:

- The student’s school and community
- Academic preparation
- Books read
- People the student admires
- Current events
- Personal interests
- Unusual experiences and circumstances

An interview may cover one specific topic or a variety of contemporary issues. Your child should be up-to-date with current events. Your child should be poised and confident when answering questions. Admissions officers will evaluate whether the student can defend his/her answers.

## **Preparing for the Interview:**

The best way for you to help prepare your child for an interview is to practice some generic questions that will familiarize your child with those often asked. Keep in mind, however, your child should be spontaneous and not appear rehearsed during the actual interview. Some of these questions may be:

1. Why do you want to attend this school?
2. Where else are you applying and why?
3. What do you expect to be doing ten years from now?
4. What do you feel you can bring to our campus?
5. What is your favorite book and why?
6. If you could spend an hour with any person in the world, who would it be and why?
7. What do you view as your biggest achievement and why?

These, again, are just examples. You want your child to think about answers that will make your child stand out from other students. It may be best to have the first or the last interview of the day so that your child can leave an excellent first impression or a final mark on the interviewer's day. Your child should prepare at least one question for the interviewer.

## **Interview Checklist:**

### *BEFORE –*

- Schedule the interview and note the date on a calendar so you do not forget about it.
- Ask what type of interview you will be having.
- Research the college website and jot down notes about why you want to attend there.
- Review hypothetical questions an interviewer may ask and run through a mock interview.
- Write down questions you plan to ask the interviewer.
- Get directions to the admissions office.
- Select an appropriate outfit for the interview.
- Gather any essential materials, including a high school transcript, resume and test scores.

### *DURING –*

- Be outgoing, poised, and confident. You want the admissions officer to perceive your personality and recognize that you are honest and sure of yourself.
- Mention both your academic and your extracurricular background. This is your chance to brag about yourself verbally.
- Remain calm and composed.
- Ask at least one question at the end of the interview when the interviewer inquires if there is anything else you want to know. Ask thought provoking questions that were not covered during the interview, not something that can easily be found online. This will demonstrate that you took time to research the school.

### *AFTER –*

- Make notes about the interview so you remember the questions and how you answered.
- Ask for the interviewer's business card.
- Send a thank you note to the admissions officer or staff that interviewed you.
- Remain in contact with the interviewer if that school is your first choice.

## **Creating a Positive Impression:**

You can easily influence the direction of an interview positively in the following ways:

1. Be on time. You do not want to start off on the wrong foot. It is better to be sitting in the waiting room than to arrive late.
2. Dress appropriately. It is not necessary to buy a new suit or dress for the interview; however, you should be comfortable and look presentable.
3. Maintain eye contact. This is the best way for the interviewer to know that you are paying attention and are interested in the meeting.
4. Display introspection. Let the interviewer know that you are self-aware and that you can recognize both your strengths and weaknesses while being positive about yourself.
5. Sit up straight and actively listen. Head nods, replying to every comment – even if it is just saying “yes” or “right”.
6. Be open and honest with the interviewer. You don’t want to put up a false front and paint a picture that does not truly represent who you are.
7. Provide specific responses. When the interviewer asks you a question, don’t just give the answer, elaborate in an intelligent and insightful manner.
8. Remain positive throughout the interview.

## SECTION 7: DESCRIPTION OF AVERAGE ADMISSION POLICIES

One way colleges can be categorized is by the selectivity of their admissions policies. College admission offices strongly consider academic achievement, along with other personal information; such as, school activities, community service and special talents. Scholastic achievement can be classified in many ways. This includes class rank, grade point average, and scores on standardized tests; such as, the SAT or ACT. Remember GPA is cumulative, beginning in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The GPA at the conclusion of 11<sup>th</sup> grade is the one colleges consider in making admission decisions. GPA is updated at the conclusion of the first semester of 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Schools requesting mid-year grades will receive the updated GPA.

The chart below is intended to give a brief review of college admission policies. You can get a general idea of the level of admission selectivity that best matches your child’s academic profile. *Remember, there is more to the process than just numbers.*

Level of Admission Selectivity	Class Rank	Average Grade	Average SAT (Middle 50%)	Average ACT (Middle 50%)
Most Selective	Top 5%	A	2100-2400	28-36
Highly Selective	Top 15%	A/B+	1950-2050	25-28
Very Selective	Top 30%	B	1800-1950	21-25
Selective	Top 50%	B/C+	1670-1800	18-21
Less Selective	Top 75%	C	Below 1670	Below 18

## SECTION 8: ADMISSIONS STATISTICS FROM THE CLASS OF 2009

The following chart provides matriculation data for Abington Senior High School students from the class of 2009. Included in the chart are the Abington and national **averages** for GPA and SAT scores. The SAT scores are on a 1600 scale (not including writing). Keep in mind that the national average GPA may or may not be weighted. Abington’s GPA can be as high as 4.6. All of this information can be further researched through Naviance or the individual college websites.

College Name	Avg. SAT Abington	Avg. GPA Abington	Avg. SAT Nat'l	Avg. GPA Nat'l
Albright College	1052	3.4	1000	3.31
Alfred University	980	3.33	1120	3.0

Arcadia University	1049	3.38	1078	3.0
Bard College	1308	3.86	---	3.5
Bloomsburg University	1024	3.06	1020	3.0
Boston College	1390	4.27	1340	---
Boston University	1329	4.07	1270	3.54
Brandeis University	1380	4.38	1370	3.88
Brown University	1423	4.52	1430	---
Cabrini College	1018	3.29	950	3.1
Chestnut Hill College	1046	3.18	970	3.0
Cheyney University of Pennsylvania	853	1.87	---	---
City University of New York, City College	1067	3.63	1122	3.49
Clemson University	1090	3.54	1225	3.9
Community College of Philadelphia	738	1.79	---	---
Connecticut College	1440	4.06	1325	---
Coppin State University	880	2.07	845	2.96
Dartmouth College	1463	4.53	1440	---
Delaware State University	886	2.51	865	2.58
Delaware Valley College	1015	2.91	1020	3.45
Drew University	1187	3.67	1150	3.2
Drexel University	1224	3.74	1200	3.3
Duquesne University	1174	3.44	1120	3.57
East Carolina University	1048	3.12	1010	3.0
East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania	1003	2.97	975	---
Eastern University	1227	3.51	1045	3.36
Elizabethtown College	1216	3.75	1110	3.2
Franklin Pierce University	970	2.31	980	2.79
Gettysburg College	1176	3.89	1300	3.5
Goucher College	1271	3.72	1170	3.2
Gwynedd-Mercy College	994	3.13	979	---
Hofstra University	1128	3.52	1175	3.26
Holy Family University	986	3.16	930	---
Howard University	1171	3.51	1140	---
Indiana University at Bloomington	1136	3.26	1150	3.6
Indiana University of Pennsylvania	976	2.69	965	---
Ithaca College	1172	3.78	1185	---
James Madison University	1170	3.68	1140	3.74
Keystone College	997	2.77	890	2.0
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania	1014	3.11	995	3.13
La Salle University	1061	3.38	1015	3.4
Lafayette College	1364	4.27	1280	3.5
Lehigh University	1357	4.22	1315	---
Lincoln University	871	2.28	820	2.8
Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania	967	2.84	935	3.12
Maryland Institute College of Art	1215	3.5	1160	3.58

Millersville University of Pennsylvania	1092	3.28	1055	---
Montgomery County Community College	896	2.39	---	---
Muhlenberg College	1306	4.2	1220	3.5
New York University	1379	4.15	1345	3.7
North Carolina State University	1285	4.22	1165	4.19
Northeastern University	1347	4.13	1270	3.85
Pace University, New York City	1185	3.38	1080	3.2
Pennsylvania State University, Abington	1000	2.97	940	3.3
Pennsylvania State University, University Park	1189	3.75	1195	3.77
Philadelphia Biblical University	1201	3.72	1030	3.29
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	1303	3.85	1335	---
Rider University	1084	3.36	1035	3.02
Rochester Institute of Technology	1285	3.37	1200	3.7
Rutgers University, New Brunswick	1202	3.63	1185	---
Saint Joseph's University	1135	3.65	1110	3.4
Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania	1019	3.01	990	---
Spelman College	1025	3.39	1070	3.61
Susquehanna University	1144	3.52	1115	3.5
Swarthmore College	1370	4.51	1435	---
Syracuse University	1219	3.92	1170	3.6
Temple University	1140	3.48	1110	3.35
The Art Institute of Philadelphia	931	2.65	---	---
The College of New Jersey	1289	3.84	1250	---
The George Washington University	1315	4.02	1290	---
The University of Arizona	1052	3.13	1100	3.4
The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill	1303	4.47	1035	4.0
The University of Scranton	1113	3.56	1120	3.35
The University of the Arts	1121	3.11	1040	2.9
Tufts University	1453	4.5	1420	---
Tuskegee University	965	2.77	875	3.0
University of Connecticut	1212	3.65	1210	---
University of Delaware	1250	3.86	1195	3.5
University of Hartford	1119	3.45	1055	3.0
University of Maryland, College Park	1254	3.99	1275	3.6
University of Maryland, Eastern Shore	888	2.58	820	2.7
University of Massachusetts, Amherst	1147	3.76	1155	3.29
University of Miami	1280	3.89	1285	3.8
University of Pennsylvania	1417	4.47	1425	3.75
University of Pittsburgh	1233	3.85	1245	3.6
University of Rhode Island	1051	3.27	1051	3.31
University of Richmond	1230	3.99	1265	---
University of South Carolina	1210	3.44	1180	3.57
University of the Sciences in Philadelphia	1111	3.51	1175	3.3
University of Vermont	1217	3.8	1190	---

University of Washington	1183	3.88	1195	3.69
Ursinus College	1234	3.87	1230	3.6
Villanova University	1319	4.17	1305	3.5
Virginia Commonwealth University	1193	3.89	1080	3.07
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	1180	3.29	1238	3.67
Virginia State University	963	2.59	856	2.8
Wesleyan University	1475	4.52	1395	3.7
West Chester University of Pennsylvania	1079	3.27	1055	3.09
West Virginia University	956	2.9	1055	3.3
Widener University	1009	2.92	995	3.27
York College of Pennsylvania	1142	3.37	1075	3.0

## SECTION 9: ADMISSIONS AND TESTING VOCABULARY

To help you demystify all the acronyms you will encounter, below is a list of the key tests and testing body you are likely to encounter over the next few years.

**ACT** (American College Test). A three-hour examination that consists of tests in four areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. The form is multiple-choice; each section yields a score between 1 and 36. Colleges are interested in the composite score, which is the average of all four sections. The national average composite score is approximately 21. The ACT is becoming much more widespread with colleges along the East Coast, as many will convert the scores to an SAT score. This gives students the option of taking the ACT, the SAT, or both. Students are not penalized if they answer a question wrong on the ACT. Many colleges will take the ACT with Writing in place of SAT Subject Tests.

**AP** (Advanced Placement) Test. Three hour examination based on college-level material completed in high school. Results are used for college credit and/or placement. AP exams are administered once a year in May and are offered in approximately 30 subjects.

**CEEB** (College Entrance Examination Board). Usually referred to as the College Board, this organization sponsors the PSAT, SAT, and AP Examinations. Each year, CEEB publishes three bulletins about the tests that are available in the guidance offices. These bulletins include registration forms and offer information on test-taking strategies, review of skills, concepts and question types, and provide sample tests with answers and scoring instructions. **Abington's CEEB code is 390000.**

**ETS** (Educational Testing Service). The organization contracted by The College Board to write and score SAT examinations.

**PSAT/NMSQT** (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test). This is administered once a year in October. It's given as a practice exam for the SAT and consists of a verbal section, a mathematics section, and a writing skills section. The students do not actually write an essay. The results of the PSAT are not reported to colleges and they are scored on a 20-80 range for each section.

For high school juniors, PSAT scores determine eligibility for National Merit Scholarships. Of over one million students who sit for the PSAT, approximately 15,000 qualify as National Merit Semifinalists. Eligibility for the scholarship varies from state to state and is based on the percentage of test-takers in the state. The greater the number of test-takers the higher the selection index, which usually falls in the upper 90-percentile.

**SAT REASONING TEST.** The SAT is a 3 hour and 35 minute test. It begins with the essay writing section and is followed by alternating sections of critical reading and math. There is also a writing skills section. The test is scored out of 2400, each section ranging from 200-800. The critical reading sections will consist primarily of reading passages and comprehension questions, while the math will consist of problem solving including Algebra II. In total, there are 10 sections. Students are penalized after answering a certain number of questions incorrectly, but skipping questions does not count against the test-taker. Students who receive special accommodations via an IEP (Individual Education Program) or a Section 504 Service Agreement may be able to receive extended testing time. Contact your child's Guidance Counselor for more information.

**SAT SUBJECT TESTS.** These hour-long tests, scored on a scale from 200-800, measure knowledge of nearly 20 specific content areas. Students may take up to three tests during a single SAT administration. Generally, the best time to take an SAT Subject Test is upon completion of study of a particular subject. Not every subject is offered at each test administration so check with the guidance office for specifics.

SAT Subject Tests are offered in the following:

- *English: Literature*
- *Social Studies: American History and Social Studies, World History*
- *Math: Level I, Level II*
- *Science: Biology, Chemistry, Physics*
- *Language: Chinese w/Listening, French, French w/Listening, German, German w/Listening, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Japanese w/Listening, Korean w/Listening, Latin, Spanish, Spanish w/Listening, English Language Proficiency*

Not all schools require SAT Subject tests. Some schools will ask your child to take specific tests depending on your child's choice of major. Some schools will also accept the ACT with Writing in place of the SAT Subject Tests.

**SCORE CHOICE.** Score choice gives you the option to choose which test scores you would like to send to colleges. This allows students to pick their best scores in each section and have only those sent to the college. Not every college accepts Score Choice. Some schools will only take scores from the overall best sitting. Other colleges will require all test scores. This allows schools to evaluate score progression through the testing process. If you choose Score Choice, make sure your college will accept this option.

**TOEFL** (Test of English as a Foreign Language). TOEFL evaluates the English proficiency of students whose native language is not English. It is a three-hour multiple-choice test measuring listening comprehension, structure and written expression, and reading comprehension. The test is offered twelve times yearly at locations worldwide. Students who speak another language at home should take the TOEFL.

**SAT REGISTRATION.** If you would like to take the test at Abington High School, the test center code is **39-100**. Be sure to include the CEEB code so that the high school will receive your child's test scores, **390000**.

## **SECTION 10: FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION**

*An excellent resource for insights into financial aid and scholarship information can be found in *Funding Education Beyond High School: The Guide to Federal Student Aid 2010-1011* (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). This can be accessed online at*

[http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/attachments/siteresources/Funding\\_Education\\_Beyond\\_HS\\_2010-11.pdf](http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/attachments/siteresources/Funding_Education_Beyond_HS_2010-11.pdf).

If you want financial aid, your first move is to learn about the colleges and their aid policies. Some offer only need-based aid; others give hundreds of merit scholarship and talent awards. The most expensive colleges tend to combine a high price tag with rather large aid packages. Other colleges may cost less annually, but may not offer as much money as your family may need. In addition to awarding their own money, college aid offices can provide access for most federal and state money. Every school has its own financial aid office. Making contact with these offices will benefit you and your family, hopefully easing the financial burden of four years of post-secondary schooling.

A few words to know when it comes to financial aid:

1. Grants – money that does not have to be repaid.
2. Scholarships – money that does not have to be repaid. Be aware if scholarships are going to be paid yearly or just one time.
3. Loans – money that does need to be repaid.
4. Employment – on or off campus job.

There are two types of financial aid, merit-based and need-based. Merit-based aid is given to students strictly on the basis of their achievements in areas such as academics, special characteristics, skills or talents, and involvement in the school or community. This does not have to be repaid and is typically renewable from year to year. Need-based aid is aid awarded to students based on financial need. This will eventually be repaid. Students are re-evaluated each year as the family's financial situation may change.

The best scholarship search programs are available on the internet for free. Families can and should search these databases for private awards. Most national scholarship contests are incredibly competitive; winning one of the big ones can be tougher than getting into Harvard! A better strategy is to look locally; such as, a community Elks Club or area Daughters of the American Revolution chapter. Many nearby agencies and companies offer scholarships and awards that may be just right for your child. You can contact your child's Guidance Counselor for a list of these opportunities. They are also available online through Naviance, in both the Scholarship and Resources sections.

**Fiction: Middle-class families never qualify for aid.**

**Fact: New aid programs target millions of middle-income students.**

Private colleges have poured millions of dollars into discounts in order to attract middle-class customers from some of their less expensive public competitors. Though these are often awarded as merit-based scholarships, these awards benefit both average and extremely high achieving students whose families are able to pay the difference in the college cost. The popularity of merit-based scholarships and middle-class tuition relief has not been lost on state legislatures, which have been working exceptionally hard to create new programs.

**Fiction: Need-based aid packages depend only on a need-based formula.**

**Fact: Colleges give better need-based aid packages to the students they want the most.**

The first trick is to understand that need-based packages include government money, which is distributed exclusively by a need-based formula, and money from the college's own funds, which can be awarded on any basis so long as it does not exceed a student's need. Top recruited students and athletes are much more likely to see large grants from the latter category. Colleges refer to this as "preferential packing" or "merit-within-need." The practice is nearly universal at private colleges, which use millions of their own dollars to attract the most desirable students. Borderline students are often more burdened with large loans or aid packages that may not fulfill their entire need.

**Fiction: Aid awards are non-negotiable.**

**Fact: Aid awards can *sometimes* be negotiated.**

Persistence and reasonable advocacy may help you get a better aid package. But keep in mind, the process has much less to do with bargaining than with careful preparation. Work with your child to find a good mix of schools that you can afford and those that may require some financial assistance. Keep an eye out for any specific scholarships offered by an individual school that may directly apply to your child. In the end, private colleges are more likely to offer awards to their top-notch students; a few even advertise that they will match offers from competing institutions if they are interested in a particular student. However, many colleges are not willing to budge once they make an aid offer, so be prepared to find other means of assistance.

### **THE FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)**

The FAFSA is a free application for federal and state aid. It can be found at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). One FAFSA form must be filed each year. You may list up to ten colleges on one form. Your schools will receive all of the information you input electronically. The FAFSA computes an expected family contribution (EFC) according to a federal methodology. The primary factors in calculating the EFC include the family's taxable income, untaxed income and benefits, the number of family members, the number of dependent children currently in college, and family assets. It excludes the value of your home and retirement funds. If your EFC is found to be less than your cost of attendance (COA), or the total bill for one year at college, then you will qualify for aid. The COA includes tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, personal expenses, and transportation allowance.

**There are four sources of aid:**

#### **1. Federal Aid –**

- a. Must be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- b. Have high school diploma or the equivalent
- c. Must be matriculating in a degree/certificate program at an accredited Title IV school
- d. Must be registered with Selective Service if a male between 18 and 25 years-old
- e. Must be free of drug possession or sale conviction

*There are different types of Federal aid:*

1. Pell Grant (need-based):
  - a. Academic Competitiveness Grant – For students who took a rigorous high school curriculum
  - b. National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (SMART) - for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students in physical, life, or computer sciences, math, technology, engineering, or critical foreign languages.
2. Campus – Based Aid: Colleges have set allocations for campus based funds. Students may receive these from one school and not another.
  - a. Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) - Typically must receive the Pell Grant too.
  - b. Perkins Loan (exceptional need)
  - c. Federal Work Study
3. Stafford Loan –
  - a. Available to all students regardless of need.
  - b. Will be in the student's name; No credit check required.
  - c. Repayment begins 6 months after graduating or withdrawing from school.

- d. Classified as subsidized or unsubsidized.
  - e. Competitive interest rate that is reset every July 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - f. Amount will vary depending on your year in school.
4. Federal PLUS Loan –
- a. Loan is in the parent’s name.
  - b. Interest rate variable
  - c. Repayment begins 60 days after 2<sup>nd</sup> disbursement; deferments are now available.
  - d. A credit check is involved.
  - e. You can borrow up to the cost of attendance, minus other financial aid that your child is receiving.
  - f. Additional unsubsidized loans are available to students whose parent(s) are denied a PLUS loan or who show poor credit.
2. **State Aid –**
- a. Pennsylvania State Grant (for PA residents): - for students attending a Pennsylvania school. Aid depends on funding
    - i. Eligibility based on need and family’s unique circumstances.
    - ii. Only specified amounts of money will transfer to schools outside of Pennsylvania.
    - iii. Students must file the FAFSA by May 1 for the upcoming fall term.
    - iv. Check [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org) for other grant information.
3. **College/University Aid –** colleges may offer significant amounts of money to assist students. Factors that may influence this include: academics, SAT scores, AP courses, activities, talents, class rank, athletic eligibility, geographic diversity, legacy, high school attended, etc. *Be sure to watch deadlines and criteria for eligibility at each school.*
4. **Private Scholarships or Outside Sources**

### **Filling out the FAFSA:**

The first thing you need to do is obtain an electronic pin for your FAFSA form. A PIN is a 4-digit number that is used to identify you as someone who has the right to access your personal information on Federal Student Aid Web sites. To obtain a pin, go to [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov). When you receive your pin, you will then be able to electronically sign any financial aid related documents online.

You also need to gather the following documents prior to completing the FAFSA form:

- Social Security Number
- Driver’s License
- W-2 Forms from current tax year or any other proof of money earned
- Your current Federal Income Tax Return (if your child is considered a dependent)
- Your current untaxed income records
- Your current bank statements
- Your current business and investment mortgage information, business and farm records, stock, bond and other investment records
- Alien registration or permanent registration card (if not a U.S. citizen)

You may also want to print out the FAFSA on the web worksheet to help you through the steps prior to filling everything out online. This can be found at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/fafsaws01bw.pdf>.

*The FAFSA is available on January 1 of every year. The earlier you complete the FAFSA, the better. Most selective colleges will want this completed no later than March.*

### **THE CSS/FINANCIAL AID PROFILE**

Some very competitive universities require the CSS/PROFILE. This allows colleges to consider other assets; such as, home equity, the finances of non-custodial parents, trust funds, expectation of summer earnings, private school tuition, life insurance and pension plans and even family automobiles.

The CSS Profile may be completed on line at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). The CSS generates an individualized PROFILE for each family, including all supplemental information requested by the colleges. On the registration form, students designate which colleges should receive the Profile.

The following list includes the colleges in Delaware, DC, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania that require the CSS/PROFILE from all financial aid applicants. Additional schools may require it of certain applicants, such as those applying Early Decision. Families are advised to confirm the requirements of each college. A complete list of colleges throughout the country that require the CSS/PROFILE is available at:

<https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/PXRemotePartInstitutionServlet/PXRemotePartInstitutionServlet.srv>.

Adelphi University	Cornell University	Ithaca College	Smith College
Alfred University	Dickinson College	Johns Hopkins University	St. John's College
American University	D'Youville College	Lafayette University	St. Lawrence College
Amherst College	Elmira College	Lehigh University	Susquehanna University
Babson College	Emerson College	Long Island University	Swarthmore University
Bard College	Fordham University	Loyola University	Syracuse University
Barnard College	Franklin and Marshall College	Manhattan School of Music	Tufts University
Bentley University	George Washington University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Union College
Boston College	Georgetown University	Moravian College	University of Pennsylvania
Boston University	Gettysburg College	Mount Holyoke College	University of Rochester
Brandeis University	Gordon College	Muhlenberg College	Ursinus College
Bryn Mawr College	Goucher College	Nazareth College	Vassar College
Bucknell University	Hamilton College	Northeastern University	Villanova University
Clark University	Hampshire College	NYU – Abu Dhabi	Wellesley College
Colgate University	Harvard University	Regis College	Wells College
College of the Holy Cross	Haverford College	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Wheaton College
Columbia University	Hebrew Union College	Sarah Lawrence College	Williams College
Cooper Union	Hobart and William Smith College	Seton Hill University	Worcester Polytechnic Institute

*In addition to the FAFSA and CSS/PROFILE, or sometimes instead of the latter, some colleges also require families to complete the college's own aid form, referred to as an "institutional" form. Institutional forms can be used to supplement information from the FAFSA and PROFILE. Few things are as confusing as the need-assessment process, but there is at least one: the myriad of policies and procedures governing how aid is distributed.*

## **APPENDIX A**

### **SUMMARY OF COLLEGE PLANNING**

*If you plan to apply to college the next school year, please review the following information with your child and make some tentative plans during the summer to make college visits and prepare all of the materials for your child's return to school in the fall.*

1. Take the SAT or ACT at least one time, preferably twice, in junior year.
2. Make a list of potential colleges to which you will apply. Utilize Naviance to compare your scores and GPA to other Abington High School students who have applied in the past. If your scores are a little low, consider taking the SAT or ACT again in senior year.
3. Utilize the summer between junior and senior year to visit colleges and prepare application materials. Access the common application online and prepare college essays so they can be reviewed and edited at the beginning of the school year.
4. Commencing senior year, ask two teachers (at least one from 11<sup>th</sup> grade) to write letters of recommendation. Give each teacher a stamped envelope addressed to the admissions office of each college. Also, include any teacher forms that are required.
5. Fill out all applications. Most colleges prefer online applications. Pay attention to all deadlines, especially if you are applying Early Decision or Early Action.
6. Give the Guidance Counselor the following:
  - a. Transcript release form signed by parent or guardian.
  - b. Completed activities sheet or resume.
  - c. One envelope with three stamps addressed to the admissions office of each college. Do not place a return address on the envelopes.
  - d. Any secondary school report or Guidance Counselor forms that the college requires.

*Allow 2 – 3 weeks for everything to be processed by the Guidance Office.*

7. Follow-up with each school to ensure receipt of your information. The Guidance Counselor will send a letter of recommendation, your transcript (with SAT scores, unless otherwise specified), the school profile, and any forms for individual schools. Your application will not be complete until the college receives all required material from the high school.
8. Spend a weekend at one of the schools to get the feel for college life.
9. Fill out the FAFSA online and the CSS/PROFILE if any of your colleges require it. It is better to fill this out earlier than later. Also, pursue scholarship opportunities.

10. If a school requests mid-year grades, give your Guidance Counselor an envelope addressed to each admissions office, with one stamp and no return address. Mid-year grades are sent at the conclusion of the first semester (early February).
11. Patiently wait for the admissions decisions to arrive. Rolling admissions decisions will arrive within 4-6 weeks of receiving all materials. Early decision/action decisions will arrive in mid-December. Regular admissions decisions usually arrive in early March.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

**College Applications:** Allow 2 – 3 weeks between the time you give your materials to your Guidance Counselor and when they are mailed. If the deadlines for your schools are between late December and early January, your Guidance Counselor should receive your materials no later than November 30. *Be sure to check deadlines for all applications!*

**FAFSA Forms:** FAFSA on the web becomes available January of every year. The earlier you fill this out, the better. Most colleges require your form be filed by the end of March.

**Abington Senior High School Scholarships:** Announcements concerning Abington Senior High School Scholarship packets will be made in March during morning and afternoon announcements. These packets will be available in the Guidance Offices, with the applications to be returned late March-early April. Information is also available on the Guidance Department website. There are over 80 scholarships available for seniors, encompassing a wide array of categories.

## APPENDIX C

### NCCA REQUIREMENTS

Before an athlete can play a sport or receive an athletic scholarship at a Division I or II college, he/she must meet the specific academic requirements as set forth by the NCAA. These can all be found at [http://eligibilitycenter.org/ECWR2/NCAA\\_EMS/NCAA.html](http://eligibilitycenter.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.html).

If you are considering playing a sport at the collegiate level, you must apply to the NCAA for clearance. You can apply online at [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net). You are responsible for submitting the initial application (including fee) and your SAT or ACT scores. After you have sent your application, bring your signed Transcript Release form to the Guidance Office. Your current transcript and your final transcript will be sent to the Clearing House, as required. You do not need an envelope for this application.

**Division I:** If a student plans to enroll in a Division I college following graduation from high school and wants to participate in athletics or receive an athletic scholarship, the student must meet the following academic standards:

- Graduate from high school.
- Complete the 16 core courses listed below.
- Present a minimum required GPA in these core courses.
- Achieve a combined SAT or ACT sum score that matches the student's core course GPA. A sliding scale is used, so a higher GPA can coincide with a lower SAT or ACT score. This can be found at: <http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/af238a804e0b869285bcf51ad6fc8b25/Quick+Reference+Sheet+for+IE+Standards+-+6-18-09.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=af238a804e0b869285bcf51ad6fc8b25>
- All SAT or ACT scores must be reported directly to the NCAA – code 9999.

#### 16 Required Core Courses

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of Mathematics (Algebra I or higher)
- 2 years of Natural/Physical Science (including 1 year of lab)
- 1 year of additional English, Math, or Science

- 2 years of Social Sciences
- 4 years of additional courses (From any area above, foreign languages, non-doctrinal religion, and philosophy)

You will be a nonqualifier if you do not meet the academic requirements listed above. As a nonqualifier, you cannot participate in athletic competition or practice during your first year of college. You may receive financial aid based only on need (not-athletics based) in your first year of college. In addition, you may play only three seasons (to earn a fourth season, you must graduate before your 5<sup>th</sup> year of college).

#### **Division II:**

- Minimum GPA of 2.0
- Minimum SAT of 820 or ACT sum score of 68.

#### **14 Required Core Courses**

- 4 years of English
- 2 years of Mathematics (Algebra I or higher)
- 2 years of Natural/Physical Science (including one year of lab)
- 1 year of additional English, Math, or Science
- 2 years of Social Sciences
- 3 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign languages, non-doctrinal religion, and philosophy)

A student is considered a partial qualifier if the student does not meet the academic requirements listed above, but has graduated from high school and has one of the following: (1) The specified minimum SAT or ACT scores; or (2) completion of the required core courses with a 2.0 GPA in these courses. As a partial qualifier, you may practice with your team at its home facility and you may receive an athletic scholarship during your first year of college. You may not compete during your freshmen year but you may compete in the four remaining seasons.

If a student has not graduated high school or has not presented the core course GPA, SAT, or ACT scores required for a qualifier, the student is considered a nonqualifier. As a nonqualifier, the same consequences exist as with a Division I school, however, you are still eligible to play for four years.

## APPENDIX D

### REFERENCES

- “America’s Best Colleges”: 2009 Ed. U.S. News & World Report.
- The College Board (2010). The College Handbook (2010). New York, NY: College Entrance Examination Board.
- Cohen, K. (2002). The Truth About Getting In. New York, NY: Hyperion.
- The College Board (2000). 10 Real SATs. New York, NY: CEEB and the Educational Testing Service (ETS).
- Custard, E., Meltzer, T., Owens, E., & McCarthy, S. (2009). The Best 371 Colleges: 2010 Ed. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.
- Federal Student Aid (2008). Funding Education Beyond High School: The Guide to Federal Student Aid 2009-2010. Jessup, MD: U.S. Department of Education.
- Good, J. & Lee, L. (1998). Get Into Any College: Secrets of Harvard Students. Los Altos, CA: 101 Publishing.
- Hernandez, M.A. (1997). A Is For Admission: The Insiders Guide to Getting Into the Ivy League and Other Top Colleges. New York, NY: Warner Books, Inc.
- Nieuwenhuis, M. (1997). The Parent’s Guide to College Admissions. New York, NY: Simon & Shuster.
- Rugg, F.E. (2008). Rugg’s Recommendations on the Colleges. Fallbrook, CA: Rugg’s Recommendations.

## APPENDIX E

### WEB RESOURCES

#### College Admission:

College Net – [www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)

College View – [www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com)

Common Application – [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)

Naviance – <https://connection.naviance.com/ashs>

Peterson's – [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

U.S. News & World Report - <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/eduhome.htm>

Unigo – [www.unigo.com](http://www.unigo.com)

Virtual Campus Tours – [www.campustours.com](http://www.campustours.com)

#### Financial Aid:

CSS/PROFILE - <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp>

FAFSA – [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

Financial Aid Guide - [http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student\\_guide/index.html](http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student_guide/index.html)

PIN – [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov)

Sallie Mae – [www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)

#### Testing:

ACT – [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

Free Test Preparation – [www.educationplanner.org](http://www.educationplanner.org)

Free Test Preparation – [www.number2.com](http://www.number2.com)

Kaplan – [www.kaptest.com](http://www.kaptest.com)

Princeton Review – [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)

SAT I/SAT II Registration – [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

**Scholarships:**

Fast Web – [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

Fast Aid – [www.fastaid.com](http://www.fastaid.com)

The Smart Guide to Financial Aid – [www.finaid.com](http://www.finaid.com)

Naviance – <https://connection.naviance.com/ashs>

Scholarship Experts - <http://www.scholarshipexperts.com/?sourceid=NAVrsc>