

MCSM Class of 2017

College Handbook



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Dear Students and Parents/Guardians of the Class of 2017:

As you approach the end of your junior year here at MCSM you are realizing that college is just over the horizon. This is an important family decision, which determines the opportunities you will have in life. Some of you have chosen career paths, and some of you are just beginning to wonder what the future can bring. Choosing a college that is best suited for you is now going to become your primary purpose. You have spent the past few years striving to improve your grades and challenge yourself academically. Our mission at MCSM, from the day you arrived, is to provide you with the greatest number of quality college choices. How hard you have worked will determine the choices you will have. We want every student to find their place in this world, and often this begins with the right college choice.

This College Handbook was created specifically for MCSM juniors to guide students through the college selection process. Please take time to read this handbook thoroughly. You must refer to the enclosed College Planning Calendar so that you can plan for and meet all application deadlines.

Remember, choosing a college is a family decision. Please share this handbook with your parents so that they can be supportive of you in this process.

Sincerely

Mr. Michael Salek,
Assistant Principal, Pupil Personnel Services

Joseph Barreto,
Guidance Counselor

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NAVIANCE Family Connection

Family Connection on Naviance is an online data management system that assists students with their college research. Both students and their parents have access to important admissions data. Before the initial registration to the Family Connection in Naviance, students and their parents will receive their own personal Registration Codes. The registration process for students and parents is identical.

Please follow these directions:

- **Student Registration:** go to <https://connection.naviance.com/mcsm> on the Internet. Click the highlighted “I need to register” at the upper-right-hand corner. Enter the Registration Code and click “Enter”. You will be taken to a page that asks you to enter your email address and password twice. Students should use their personal email address and eventually use the same address for your Common Application account. Click the “I accept” box and then click the “Complete Registration” button. Once you are registered you may access the account by using your email address that you entered and password that you created at <https://connection.naviance.com/mcsm>. There are four tabs on the home page: **Colleges**, **Careers**, **About Me**, and **My Planner**. Explore your Naviance account. There is much information to discover.
- **Parent Registration:** please see **About Me** Tab for details.

About Me Tab: All students are required to invite their parents through the “profile” feature by adding their parent information under this tab. Once you click on your “profile,” you will be able to find the “add parent” button. Please complete all required fields, click “Add New Parent.” A parent Registration Code will be generated when you have added their parent’s information. Once your parents receive the Registration Code, they should follow the same process as Student Registration to create their own account.

Also under the **About Me** tab, the “journal” feature allows you to organize all your thoughts and plans in one online location where you can always reach it. One of the best features about the journal is that you can have your journal open on one tab as you explore a college website on another tab. You can take notes or cut and paste information from the website directly into your journal. Keeping all of your research notes in one location will help you write that very important why this college or program section of your application.

Please check to make sure that your “profile” and “testing information” are correct. If there is an error, notify your college counselor.

Careers Tab: In this section you will be able to explore careers and complete personality questionnaires by completing the personality type and the career interest profiler. The questionnaires are designed to help you learn about yourself and what sort of careers might serve you best. You can either accept or reject this information, but you might find it useful in helping you think about

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Which universities you might wish to explore in greater detail. With this information in hand, you can use the explore careers & clusters to learn more about a variety of careers and establish a favorites list. A variety of colleges will be recommended with each list.

Colleges Tab: In this section you will find an enormous amount of resources. Explore it thoroughly. Check the college resources link for a host of different links to interesting websites on everything from financial aid to careers in the military to the Common Application. Check the scholarships link for information on numerous scholarship opportunities. Explore and have fun as you learn more about various colleges.

Where you will spend most of your time as you start the college search process is in “the colleges I’m thinking about” section. These are colleges that you are interested in or your college counselor has entered into Naviance for you to explore at the individual college consultation meeting.

In “the colleges I’m thinking about” section, you can use the visit website link to go directly to the university website. Since it opens as a separate tab, you can open up your journal on the **About Me** page and take notes as you explore the website. When you close the tab for the university website, you will still be in your Naviance account and so can continue your exploration on another university.

The “colleges I’m applying to”: Once you have decided the schools to which you will apply in the fall, you need to compile a list of the schools in this section or get them switched from the *colleges I’m thinking about* section to the *colleges I’m applying to* section.

You need to identify whether you are applying Early Decision, Early Decision II, Early Action, Restrictive Early Action, Rolling, Priority, or Regular. You are responsible for making sure that the data is correct. If you are apply to colleges through Early Decision and/or Early Action, or if your application is due on a special deadline date, you are responsible for informing your college counselor three (3) weeks before the due date. If you inform your college counselor less than three (3) weeks before the deadline, there is no guarantee that your application materials will be sent on time.

Once you have submitted your application, most universities upon receipt of your application will give you an account number or password that will allow you to monitor the arrival of each part of your application: your transcript, senior year schedule, teacher recommendations, SSR, school report form, supplements, etc. You may also monitor through your Family Connection account the sending status of your supporting documents. Please let your college counselor know if anything is missing. There can be many reasons, but no reason to panic. Your college counselor may help address the situation. Again it is your responsibility to monitor the arrival of each portion of your application.

If you have received an *Early Decision* Admission offer: Remember if you receive an acceptance from an early decision college, you must notify all other colleges to which you have submitted an application that you have received such an offer and withdraw your application. You must also come into the college office and inform your college counselor.

If you receive an *Early Action* Admission offer: You may choose to accept an early action admission offer. If so, follow the same procedure outlined above for those with an early decision offer. Or you may choose to wait for your other college admission decisions.

My Planner Tab: this is an electronic planner book. You are able to create your “goals” and “to-do-list.” Your college counselor may assign “tasks” to you, such as a meeting notice. They can be pretty important, so make sure to go through them and make sure you’re ontrack.

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College Planning Calendar

September 2015

- Your Naviance Succeed account should be active as this account was issued to you in grade 10.
- Your junior year begins, which typically marks the start of your college selection process.
- Prepare for the redesigned **PSAT/NMSQT**. This exam is also **National Merit Scholarships Qualifying Test**. In addition, it is excellent practice for the SAT.
- **PSAT or SAT scores do not appear on your high school transcript.**
- **Ongoing through this academic year you must strive for your best attendance and best academic performance as this year's grades are the first indicators used by colleges when you apply.**

October 2015

- Take the redesigned **PSAT/NMSQT** exam. Use your results to prepare a study plan for the redesigned SAT, with the first administration in March 2016.

November/December 2015

- Maintain or improve your attendance and grades as your first term transcript grades are issued in January 2016.

February 2016

- Register to take SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Tests and/or ACT Plus Writing exams.
- Students eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch are able to obtain SAT and ACT Fee Waivers. Please come to the college office to obtain fee waivers.

April 2016

- Make sure that you regularly check your Pupil Path account. Your guidance counselor often emails important information to you.

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May 2016

- It is strongly suggested that you attend the College Fair on Thursday, May 5, 2016 from 2:00 pm until 4:30 pm in the cafeteria. There are many universities that come to MCSM to meet our students and provide first-hand information.
- Take the SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject Test(s).
- We recommend that you take the SAT Reasoning Test exam in May. It is advisable to take SAT Subject Test(s) in June to benefit from just having completed your courses at MCSM
- Advanced Placement Exams are offered.
- If you are applying to a Service Academy (West Point, Annapolis, etc.), you must apply now to your US Senator or US Representative for a Service Academy Nomination.
 - Ask two (and only two) of your teachers from different subject areas if they would be willing to write letter of recommendation for you.
 - The teacher recommendation request must then be placed in Naviance by you the student.
- Continue researching colleges that might be of interest to you.
- Attend Advanced Placement course information sessions by subject department.

June 2016

- Take the SAT Reasoning Test if you did not take it in March or May.
- SAT Subject Tests are offered. Please be sure to check individual college websites for specific Admissions requirements. You may not take both SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Test(s) on the same day.

July 2016

- Have a productive summer. Consider a variety of activities such as summer study in a college program, volunteering, perhaps a job that will help you put aside money for college, etc.
- Research the various colleges. You want to find a college that will likely be a good fit for you.
- Begin your college applications and essays. Many colleges make their supplements available over the summer. Start your college essays over the summer so that you can better meet the

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demands of the whole college process while maintaining excellent first term senior year grades.

- If possible, visit college campuses. The colleges appreciate a campus visit, which is a sign of demonstrated interest.

August 2016

- Create an account on www.commonapp.org. This is where most of your college applications will be submitted. Choose a username and password that is easy to remember; you will be logging in and out numerous times over the next few months.
 - If you have not done so already, register for a Naviance *Family Connection* account by going to connections.naviance.com/mcsm. You will need your unique registration code from the college office, then proceed to the “*I need to register*” tab, and follow the prompts.
- Remember to link your common app with your Naviance *Family Connection* account by entering your common app user name and password on Naviance *Family Connection* under the *Colleges I’m Applying To* tab.

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September 2016 Your senior year begins!

- Check your transcript for accuracy. Your initial transcript, which includes all high school credits and grades up to the end of your junior year, will be sent to the colleges to which you apply. Request transcript corrections, if necessary.
- Ask two teachers (**and only two**) to write your college letters of recommendation. All students requesting teacher recommendations must make the request in Naviance.
- If you have not set up your Naviance account and/or linked Common App to Naviance, you must do so now. Please refer to August 2016 on the previous page.
- College representatives will be visiting MCSM and speaking about their schools. In many cases these are the same people who will be evaluating your college applications. You should attend college sessions schools to which you intend applying or are of high interest. College visits are listed on Naviance, where you must sign up.
- If a representative's presentation conflicts with one of your classes, make sure to ask your teacher for permission to attend and know that you are responsible for making-up any material missed during that class. Pick up a pass from the College Office for your teacher to sign if you will be missing class.
- Students should have refined list of colleges in the following categories: Reach, Target and Safety schools
- Any student considering Early Decision **MUST** begin the application process in order to make the varying deadlines which usually are at the latest November 1.
- Check www.collegeboard.org for upcoming SAT Reasoning Test dates and SAT Subject Test dates and registration deadlines.
- Check www.actstudent.org for upcoming ACT Plus Writing test dates and registration deadlines.

October 2016

- In October, November, and December, you will be notifying the College Office of your college selections by completing the *Colleges I'm Applying To* section on Naviance *Family Connection*.

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- Regarding colleges to which you are interested in applying, it is crucial to thoroughly read each colleges admissions office websites. You must provide each college with everything that it requires. Do not be disqualified for consideration because you have not provided the college with, for example, a certain SAT Subject Test or a teacher recommendation from a specific subject area (see MIT's requirements). In addition, you must adhere to all application deadlines, including application due dates and financial aid forms due dates.
- If you plan to apply Early Decision (ED) and/or Early Action (EA), you must inform the College Office by October 15, 2016. It is important that you indicate this on Naviance *Family Connection*.
- For students applying ED: The CSS Profile will be due earlier than normal. The CSS-Profile is a financial aid form that is required by some colleges. It is available at:
<https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>

November 2016

- If you plan to apply to colleges that have Rolling Admissions (e.g. many state universities and some private colleges) or a Priority Deadline (University of California, University of Texas), you must indicate this on Naviance *Family Connection* two weeks before the deadline.
- Apply to college in the City University of New York (CUNY) system – General CUNY applications may be submitted online at <http://www.cuny.edu/admissions/apply.html>. Be sure to include your 9-digit OSIS number in your CUNY application.
- If you plan to apply to the Macaulay Honors College, the CUNY Honors Programs, you *do not* need to complete a separate general CUNY application. Your CUNY Macaulay Honors application will automatically be considered for general CUNY admission.
- You may apply to colleges in the State University of New York (SUNY) by using www.CommonApp.org. Most SUNY schools are on Common App, if the school to which you are applying is not on Common App, apply directly through that schools website.
- Most colleges' deadlines for submitting your completed ED and/or EA applications are November 1 or November 15.

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December 2016

- ED and EA applicants should hear from their colleges by mid-December. You may be “accepted,” “deferred,” or “denied.”
- If you are accepted via ED application and have received a sufficient financial aid package, you must withdraw your applications from all other colleges where you have an active application.
- If you are admitted to one or more colleges via the EA application(s), you may choose whether or not to withdraw some or all of their remaining college applications.
- All acceptances and withdrawals must be indicated in your Naviance account.
- Most Regular Decision deadlines are December 31.

January 2017

- Complete your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form on www.fafsa.ed.gov
- If required, complete the CSS-Profile on www.collegeboard.org and the financial aid application forms on the websites of the individual colleges to which you are applying.
- It is in your best interest to complete the financial aid forms and your taxes as early in the year as possible, even if you have to estimate your income information on the FAFSA. Be sure to meet the various colleges’ financial aid deadlines.
- As soon as your Fall 2016 term grades are available, the College Office will automatically send them to all of the colleges to which you have applied. You do not need to bring any mid-year grades forms to the College Office.

February 2017

- Use the Presidents’ Week recess to visit the campuses of colleges that you have not yet seen.
- Make sure you have completed all financial aid applications/forms: FAFSA, CSS Profile, TAP Tuition Assistance Program –please visit www.hesc.ny.org (Higher Education Services Corporation of New York State) for more information regarding the TAP Grant, and any other financial aid forms your colleges may require.

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March 2017

- Macaulay Honors decisions are sent out in mid-March.

April 2017

- Most colleges have sent their regular decisions to applicants, and invite admitted students to visit their campuses.

May 2017

- As required by many colleges, you must accept admission to one, and only one, college by May 1 and make a tuition deposit.
 - Colleges exchange acceptance lists. **You cannot submit more than one deposit.** If you do, you may forfeit your acceptance at both institutions.
- Select a college in the “college that I am attending” in your Naviance *Family Connection* account. If you fail to do this, MCSM will not know where to send your records which will delay your registration.
- Please be considerate of students on waiting lists of colleges that have accepted you, but that you do not wish to attend, and promptly decline these colleges’ offers of admission.
- You should have received your **TAP** acknowledgement. If the school you will be attending is different from the one listed on your TAP acknowledgment, change the school and correct any incorrect financial data as soon as possible. Tuition Assistance Program grants are available only for New York State residents who attend college in New York State.
- Attend the Annual MCSM College Fair to help guide next year’s seniors.

June 2017

- During the summer months, MCSM sends your final transcript and certification of graduation forms to the college that you will attend.
- If you will need to borrow additional student loans to help pay for college, contact your college’s financial aid office for information regarding how to obtain college loans if you have not already done so.
- Congratulations Graduates!

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COLLEGE APPLICATION MATERIAL SUBMISSION CHART

Application Requirements	Responsible Party	How/When
Test Scores (SAT, Subject Tests, ACT)	Student	Send after last test taken via www.collegeboard.org or www.actstudent.org
Online Application	Student	Submit electronically by deadline
Essays & Supplemental Forms Supplemental Letters	Student	Submit electronically or mail by deadline
SSR (Secondary School Report)	The College Office	Sent electronically with transcript by deadline
Transcript	The College Office	Sent electronically with SSR by deadline
School Profile	The College Office	Sent electronically with transcript and SSR
Mid-Year Report	The College Office	Sent electronically during term 2
Teacher Letter of Recommendation	Teacher (NOT the College Office)	Usually via Naviance, by mail by deadline

INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

The College Office recommends that students apply to a maximum of no more than eight colleges.

College admissions are based primarily on:

- Your cumulative high school average through the end of your junior year and your term 1 senior year grades;
- The degree to which you have challenged yourself academically in high school. Very selective colleges will want to see that applicants have taken AP courses; four years of math and science
- Test scores on standardized exams such as the SAT Reasoning Test and ACT Plus Writing, scores on the SAT Subject Tests, which may be required by some colleges;
- Your SSR and teacher recommendations;
- Extracurricular activities and any noteworthy talents or achievements
- Demonstrated interest
- Geographic distribution;
- A personal essay;
- An interview, wherever offered;
- Other special factors include preference given to children of alumni, the ability to participate in varsity athletics, and applicants who would increase diversity on campus.

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In finding the school that is best suited for you will be required to do actual research of your school choice list on Naviance, at the minimum to determine if your grades are in range of the admissions criteria, and if the school meets your needs. Your final list of college choices should include a range of schools based on the probability of you being accepted. Please refer to the latter section of this handbook titled “Factors to Consider in Selecting a College. “ You must place the schools into the three categories below.

- “Reach” – colleges that you are very interested in but admission may be difficult
- “Target” – colleges at which you have a reasonable/good chance of gaining admission
- “Safety” – colleges that are extremely likely to offer you admission.

Your high school average is based on all course grades, except physical education, through the end of your junior year. Your average will include all Regents classes that you had taken in middle school. At the end of your first term senior year, your Mid-Year grades are sent to all of the colleges to which you have applied. The colleges will carefully evaluate these grades to make admissions decisions. A strong first term senior year can absolutely work to your advantage. A poor senior year first term, on the other hand, will adversely affect your chances for admission.

College admissions Offices favorably note Advanced Placement (AP) and other challenging classes taken in high school. According to one Dean of Admissions, “...the college will be looking foremost at the applicant’s initiative in seeking out tough courses ... even at the expense of getting slightly lower grades.” Choose a senior year program that is appropriately challenging, especially in the subject areas of interest to you. However, we want to caution you against taking a program that is too challenging for you to be successful. Do not overload your program with too many Advanced Placement courses. You need to be able to demonstrate an ability to succeed in your program. According to college admissions officers, “Students are not advised to drop advance placement courses during their senior year. Colleges often look at student records to verify that there is continued level of rigor from when the student first applied.”

Second term senior year grades and certification of graduation are reported to the college you are planning to attend. In some cases colleges request and evaluate your report card grades from the first or second marking period of your 2nd term senior year to assist in making a final decision. All colleges reserve the right to rescind your acceptance if your academic performance during your senior year does not meet its standards.

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APPLICATION OPTIONS

Early Application

Options

- Early Decision (ED): Under the ED plan, a student may only apply to one school, he or she may not apply to any other college via the ED plan. The acceptance decision is binding.
- Early Decision II (ED II): Many competitive colleges offer an ED II plan. ED II application deadlines are later than ED deadlines. The acceptance decision is binding.
- Early Action (EA): A student may apply to more than one college under an EA plan. The acceptance decision is not binding.

Colleges may have varying ED, EDII, and EA policies. It is the responsibility of each student to know the policies of the schools to which they are applying, as well as the ED policies regarding financial aid.

Regular Decision

Regular decision college deadline vary by college. Most deadlines occur in December, January, or February. This is the decision process by which most students are accepted to colleges. The acceptance decision is not binding. Students who are admitted in rolling decision usually have until May 1 to notify the college that they will be attending during the fall.

Rolling Admissions

Many state universities as well as some private colleges use rolling admissions, which refers to school admissions not based upon a deadline. However, admissions are on a first come- first serve basis, which means that seats may fill quickly for more competitive and popular schools. Decisions are often issued quickly in rolling admissions, and acceptance decisions are not binding. Student should consult the university website to check priority filing dates. This may make student eligible for additional scholarships.

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STANDARDIZED TESTING INFORMATION

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) examination measures critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skills. Sophomores and juniors take these exams at MCSM every year. Sufficient grades make sophomores eligible for College Now courses. Only the junior year score will be submitted to the National Merit Scholarship Competition. If your score is at 99th percentile, you may become a National Merit Semi-Finalist. Merit Finalists are selected during senior year and may receive college scholarships. However, PSAT/NMSQT scores are *not* a part of the college application requirements.

SAT Reasoning Test is an examination that takes approximately 4 hours to complete. It is primarily multiple-choice in format but also includes an optional essay. The SAT Reasoning Test is designed to measure critical reading, mathematical, and writing skills. SAT scores are usually required by colleges in their admissions process. We recommend that you take the SAT Reasoning Test first as a junior for the May or June administration. For more information visit www.collegeboard.com.

SAT Subject Tests are one hour in length. They are designed to measure your knowledge of a particular subject and your ability to apply that knowledge. Many colleges require or recommend one or more SAT Subject Test(s) for admission. Some colleges leave the choice of SAT Subject Tests up to the applicant while others have specific requirements. Be sure to carefully review colleges' Admissions websites to determine the standardized testing requirements of each college and/or the standardized testing requirements of specific academic programs you might be considering within a certain college.

ACT Plus Writing (American College Testing Assessment) is administered by American College Testing, is an alternative form of assessment to the SAT Reasoning Test. The ACT exam is offered "with writing" or "without writing". If you choose to take the ACT exam, you must choose the ACT exam with the writing component (ACT PlusWriting). For more information, visit www.actstudent.org. Some colleges and programs, such as the Sophie Davis Biomedical Program at the City College, require applicants to submit their ACT scores. Be sure to check the requirements of the colleges in which you are interested!

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Score Reporting

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that his or her SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Test, and ACT score reports are sent to the colleges to which, you are applying. In general, colleges will consider your highest scores on each individual section of the SAT Reasoning Test and your highest score on any individual SAT Subject Test.

Fee Waivers for the SAT and ACT tests are available to students who are eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch. Eligible students may obtain these fee waivers from the College Office.

Testing Accommodations:

- Sunday Testing is available only for students who cannot take a test on Saturday because of religious reasons.
 - Please visit
<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/reg/circum/sunday.html>
 - and/or
<http://www.actstudent.org/faq/answers/nonsat.html>
- Students with a documented disability may be able to receive testing accommodations.
 - Please visit
<https://www.collegeboard.org/students-with-disabilities>
and/or
<http://www.act.org/aap/disab/index.html>
- Standby Testing is a possibility for students who miss the late registration deadline. There is never a guarantee that you will actually be seated for an exam as a standby. Test centers accept standbys on a first-come first- served basis only if they have sufficient space, testing materials, and staff. Avoid standby testing if at all possible! Consult collegeboard.com and/or actstudent.org for more detailed information.
- Rushing Scores: The College Board and act.org provide “score rushing” services for an
 - additional fee. Rushing your score report will usually speed up delivery of your scores to colleges by up to a week or a week and a half, however, not all colleges will accept rushed scores. Also, rushed reporting does not mean rushed marking. Plan ahead and schedule your tests in a timely fashion to avoid having to rush your scores!

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Manhattan Center CEEB Code:
333784 (Both ACT and SAT)

REDESIGNED SAT AND PSAT/NMSQT

The Changes and Other Relevant Information the Class of 2017

This content is adapted from the *Counselor Resource Guide to the Redesigned Assessments: PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10, PSAT/NMSQT, and SAT*, published by the College Board, 2015.

According to the College Board, the redesigned assessments “will reflect strong instruction in mathematics, English language arts, science, history, and social studies – making it clear what students need to know to practice for the exam.” Full test specifications and extensive sample items for the redesigned PSAT/NMSQT and SAT are currently available on www.deliveringopportunity.org. Based on a wealth of evidence about essential prerequisites for student success in postsecondary education, the College Board has identified the following skill areas that a college-ready student must have acquired. S/he must be able to:

- Read, analyze, and use reasoning to comprehend challenging literary and informational texts, including tests on science and history/social studies topics, to demonstrate and expand their knowledge and understanding;
- Revise and edit extended texts across a range of academic and career-related subjects for expression of ideas and to show facility with a core set of grammar, usage, and punctuation conventions;
- Show command of a focused but powerful set of knowledge, skills, and understandings in math and apply that ability to solve problems situated in science, social studies, and career-related contexts;
- Make careful and considered use of evidence as they read and write;
- Demonstrate skill in analyzing data, including data represented graphically in tables, graphs, charts, and other formats, in reading, writing, and math contexts; and
- Reveal an understanding of relevant words in context and how word choice helps shape meaning and tone.

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The key changes in the redesigned assessments are intended to make the assessment more connected to student course work, make the test clearer, and more useful to college admissions officers. Key changes include the following:

- **Relevant Words in Context** – The redesigned assessments will focus on relevant words, not obscure vocabulary, that students will use in college and beyond.
- **Command of Evidence** – The redesigned assessments will ask students to demonstrate their ability to interpret, synthesize, and use evidence found in a wide range of sources.
- **Essay Analyzing a Source** – The redesigned SAT essay section, which will be optional, will more closely mirror college writing assignments. Students will read a passage and explain how the author builds an argument to persuade an audience.
- **Focus on Math that Matters Most** – the tests will focus on three essential areas of math: Problem Solving and Data Analysis; the Heart of Algebra; and Passport to Advanced Math.
- **Problems Grounded in Real World Contexts** – Throughout the redesigned assessments, students will engage with questions grounded in the real world and directly related to the work performed in college and career.
- **Analysis in Science and in History/Social Studies** – Students will apply their reading, writing, language, and math skills to solve problems in a broad array of contexts.
- **Founding Documents and Great Global Conversation** – Every time students take one of the redesigned assessments, they will encounter a passage from a founding document or a text from the ongoing global conversation about freedom, justice, and human dignity.
- **No Penalty for Wrong Answers** – The redesigned assessments will remove the penalty for wrong answers. Students will earn points for the questions they answer correctly.

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WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR IN APPLICANTS

- **Standardized Tests**

Your scores on standardized exams such as the SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Tests, and the ACT Plus Writing, are required by many colleges.

- □□□□**Transcript**

Your cumulative average, the rigor of the courses taken (ie, Advanced Placement/Honors) and your academic progress are important factors colleges consider when evaluating candidates for admission. It is your responsibility to carefully read your transcript to ensure that all of the information is correct.

- **Essay**

Your college essay is a critical component of your application process. This is the chance for you to express your individual attributes and qualities to colleges. You should write individual essays for each college that clearly define why you are better suited to that college than any other candidates. Modesty is not necessary, and you should clearly indicate your academic and personal accomplishments, as well as challenges you have overcome. You do not need to be too personal, but enough to make a point without seeming evasive. This is where you can really use the community service you have been doing over the years. Colleges not only want to see that you are a successful student; they also want to see that you will bring something to their community, as well as society as a whole. Your essays should be reviewed by peers, teachers and mentors before you submit them.

- **Recommendations**

Most colleges require two teacher recommendations. All teacher recommendations must be requested verbally at least two weeks in advance providing the teacher with a transcript and resume. Students must also request teacher recommendations through Naviance. Teachers upload their letters through Naviance. You may also get letters of recommendation from other adults from programs or service you have attended.

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- **Senior Grades**

Your senior year grades are looked at very closely by the colleges, as is your senior year academic program! A challenging program (ex; Advanced Placement, 4 years of math and science) is necessary for the most selective colleges. If you are an ED/EA applicant, the college(s) you apply to may request your 1st and/or 2nd marking period grades in their evaluation of your application. If you are a Regular Decision applicant, colleges may request your second term senior year 1st and/or 2nd marking period grades to aid in their evaluation of your application. In addition, colleges often review the courses you are taking 2nd term senior year to make sure that you are continuing to meet their standards of academic rigor.

- **Extracurricular Activities**

Extracurricular activities can be very beneficial in demonstrating your commitment to a given program or cause. This exemplifies who you are as a person to colleges. MCSM offers many connections to external affiliation organizations, which can be found on mcsm.net. MCSM clubs and activities are important in building a resume that indicates your commitment to your school community. These should be noted in your application and college essay. Partner organizations such as SEO, Columbia Double Discovery, NBC Scholars, ASR, NHS, and others should be detailed in your application.

- **Demonstrated Interest**

Colleges want to see that students have shown a genuine interest in them, beyond submitting the application. This is particularly true of small to medium sized colleges. Demonstrating interest in a college can be done in a variety of fashions, including campus visits, emailing questions, meeting their local representatives at college fairs, at MCSM school visits, interviews, etc.

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FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN SELECTING A COLLEGE

Choosing a college is one of the most important decisions you will make as you prepare to graduate from high school. In order to make an intelligent choice, you need to gather a great deal of information and to consider your specific requirements. Considerations such as who you are, what you hope to achieve, and the kind of environment and location in which you want to live are all important factors to consider in creating a list comprised of colleges that would likely be a good “match”, or “fit”, for you. Try to learn as much as possible about various colleges: which schools offer the kinds of programs in which you are interested, what their application requirements are, how much it will cost to finance your education at those schools, and so forth. It is important to judge a school by more than its reputation. The questions below are designed to help you evaluate many of the factors you should consider when choosing colleges to which you might apply.

Your Interests

1. What fields and subjects interest you the most? If you are unsure about your academic interests, it might be best to look for colleges that offer a wide range of programs.
2. Why do you really want to go to college? What do you expect to gain from the experience?
3. Based on your academic history, what do you feel are your strengths?

Location

1. Do you prefer a school in a large city, a college town close to a city, or a rural setting far from a major city?
2. Do you prefer a school close to home where you will be able to visit home easily for a weekend or breaks?
3. Perhaps a school where it'll be easy and financially feasible for your family to visit you?

Academics

1. Does the college offer the program(s) in which you are interested?
2. Is the college known for a particular program?
3. What are the school's policies regarding course requirements, selecting a major, double major and cross registering at neighboring schools?
4. What are the strengths or weaknesses of the program(s) in which you are interested?

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5. What is the student-to-teacher ratio? How many students are there in a typical class?
6. Are most classes taught by full-time professors or by graduate students?
7. How accessible are the college's professors? Do undergraduates have the opportunity to assist professors in their research?
8. Is there a core curriculum? Are there distribution requirements? Are decisions on curriculum left largely up to the student?
9. Does the school accept Advanced Placement credit? Is there a minimum score needed?
10. Is there an honors program available at the school? Who is eligible to participate?
11. Does the college offer/encourage study abroad or at another U.S. campus?
12. What percentage of freshmen return for the sophomore year?
13. Do most of the graduates go on to graduate school immediately upon graduation? What is the rate of acceptance at medical, law, or business schools?
14. How many graduates go right into the marketplace? Is there a career services office that assists students with finding summer internships and jobs after graduation? Which firms recruit on campus?
15. Are there opportunities for hands-on work experiences while students are in college? Do any of these pay a salary or stipend?
16. If you are planning to go to graduate school, and know which one... does this college have an affiliation to that graduate school? For example, The Wharton School and the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia Law School and Columbia University.

Size and Student Population

1. Smaller schools may be more nurturing and supportive whereas larger schools may offer greater diversity, both academically and socially. Some small colleges belong to network that enable them to offer greater resources while maintaining their supportive atmospheres.
2. Is the college small (fewer than 1000 students), medium-size, or large (more than 15,000)?
3. Does enrollment matter to you? Does the college have graduate students?
Is the college ethnically/racially/culturally diverse?
4. Does the college attract students from all over the United States and the world or are the majority of students from the immediate region?
5. What are the students like? Historically, what kinds of students are interested in this particular college and why?

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6. What kinds of student organizations are active on campus (political groups, college newspaper, student government, volunteer/mentoring groups, etc.)?
7. What is the male/female ratio?
8. What kind of religious life exists on campus?
9. Can the school meet my special needs (dietary/religious/medical/academic)?
10. Do students primarily live on campus, off-campus, or do most students commute from home?
11. What is social life on campus like? How important are fraternities and sororities? Varsity sports?

Financial Factors

1. How much will it cost to attend this school (including tuition, fees, room and board, books, travel to and from campus, and spending money)? Use the institution's *net price calculator* to get an early estimate.
2. Will I qualify for financial aid? Is the amount of financial aid offered negotiable? Does the college offer academic merit scholarships (as opposed to colleges that offer scholarships solely based on the family's "Financial Need")?
3. Will I go on to graduate school? Will this affect how much I can spend on my undergraduate education?

Facilities

1. How are the college's libraries and computer facilities?
2. Are computers required to be purchased by incoming freshmen?
3. Are there adequate sports and recreational facilities (e.g., a swimming pool, athletic fields for non-varsity players, music practice rooms)?
4. Is a wide variety of intercollegiate and intramural sports programs available? What facilities and programs are available for women?

Living Conditions/Safety

1. Is campus housing readily available? Is on-campus housing guaranteed for all four years?
2. Are the dorms coed? Are the bathrooms? Are single sex dorms available?
3. Are alternative housing arrangements available?
4. How safe is the campus? How does the college ensure safety on campus?

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WHERE TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT COLLEGES

There are many ways to learn about the myriad of excellent colleges in the U.S. and abroad. Take advantage of the resources available in the on Naviance, in the College Office, also research and try to visit those college campuses in which you are most interested.

- College websites, especially their admissions pages which can be found through Naviance
- Various college guides
- The College Office bulletin boards inside and outside Room 154
- Your College Counselors are available in the College Office Room 154
- College Fair on May 5, 2016 from 2:00-4:30pm
- Attend open houses held by various colleges
- Visit National College Fair in Manhattan; visit www.nacacnet.org for more information
- The *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, an excellent source of information about careers and the educational preparation needed for these careers, can be found online at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>.
- College Campus Visits
- College Admissions Representatives will visit Manhattan Center in the Fall during the school day to conduct information sessions and to answer your questions

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THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

As part of the application process, many colleges offer you the opportunity to have an interview with either an admissions officer or one of its New York City area alumni. The College Office encourages you to seek out interviews in order to enhance your candidacy. Once you are given the date, time, and place of the interview, the interviewer's name and title, and the interviewer's telephone number, make sure you know how to get to the location of the interview and how long the trip will take.

First impressions are important, so remember to dress appropriately for your interview. There is no need to wear a suit and tie; just look like the best version of your regular self. You should arrive to the interview ten to fifteen minutes early. Before each college interview, spend some time thinking about why you are interested in that specific college research special programs. Review the college's website and any other materials the college has sent you. Know what the college's mission or philosophy is. During your interview, show an interest in the college and its academic and extra-curricular programs. Be prepared to ask important and relevant questions that make the interviewer understand that you are a serious candidate with high interest.

Although there is no way to know exactly what you will be asked in an interview, you should be prepared to discuss such topics as:

- Why do I want to go to this particular college?
- What could I contribute to the college community?
- What are my goals, both personal and academic?
- What am I interested in (academics as well as interests outside of the classroom)?
- What do I expect to gain from my college experience?
- What are/might be my career plans?
- What did I do last summer and what did it mean to me?
- What are my favorite books?
- What was the last book I read for pleasure?

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When you meet the interviewer, shake hands. Maintain eye contact and answer questions with fully articulate sentences. Do not be afraid to say that you are undecided about your major or future plans. Show the interviewer that you are a mature, confident, intelligent, and independent young adult. Finally, be polite. Thank the interviewer as you leave. You should send a Thank You note or email to the interviewer and express your appreciation (make sure you know his/her full name and title).

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COLLEGE EXPENSES/FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid helps meet the need of your college education. How much financial aid you are offered may be a large factor in determining which college you attend. This section will give you an overview of what Financial Aid means and how you apply for it, but please remember, this is only a brief outline.

Financial Aid applications are lengthy and detailed and could take hours to complete. It is important that your family's tax forms and monetary records are up to date. If you are applying for financial aid, you and your parents should try to complete your taxes as early as possible. There are numerous, crucial financial aid deadlines set by the colleges. It is imperative to carefully read the financial aid requirements of all the colleges to which you are applying. Generally speaking, the earlier you and your family complete all required financial aid forms, the more aid a student can expect to receive. Financial aid forms have to be filled out every year you attend college.

Often, the financial aid offered by colleges is based on a family's "Financial Need" rather than the student's academic merit. "Financial Need" is defined as the difference between what it costs to attend a particular college (tuition, room, board, etc.) and what you and your family are expected to pay towards your college education. Your yearly Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is determined by completing the FAFSA form on www.fafsa.ed.gov, in many cases the CSS Profile form on www.collegeboard.org, and in some cases the specific college's own financial aid form(s). In determining a family's Expected Family Contribution (EFC), colleges consider a number of factors including: income, assets, the number of people in the family, and in many cases the value of the family's home.

When you begin your college search, you should not rule out any school because of cost. Many colleges offer individual students a tremendous amount of financial aid. However, your final list of college choices should include academic and financial "safety" schools. You can estimate the cost of attending a particular school by using the Net Price Calculator. The Net Price Calculator is a tool that you can use to estimate your "net price" to attend a particular college or university. Net price is the difference between the "sticker" price (full cost) to attend a specific college, minus any grants and scholarships for which you may be eligible. For more information, visit this link: <http://studentnpc.collegeboard.org/what-is-a-net-price-calculator>.

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Some types of financial aid are given to the student in the form of grants or scholarships, the money that you do not need to be repaid. Other financial aid comes in the form of loans that need to be repaid after graduation and/or work study that the student needs to earn through a campus job.

Once the Financial Aid Offices at each college to which you have been accepted have reviewed your family's financial information, each will send you a financial aid Award Letter. The award letter will indicate the types of financial aid you will be receiving and the amounts of each type of aid. The award amount varies from college to college. If for any reason you feel that your aid award is insufficient, or if your family's income has recently decreased for some reason, please contact the colleges' financial aid offices.

Basic College Loans

Loan Type	Description	How to Apply
Federal Stafford Loan	Students borrow money to help pay for college Please visit www.studentaid.ed.gov for details	Complete the FAFSA, college financial aid offices help you with the loan process
Parent Loans for Undergraduate (PLUS)	Students and Parents borrow money to help pay for college	Complete the FAFSA, college financial aid offices help. Please visit www.studentaid.ed.gov for details you with the loan process
Private Student Loans or Supplemental Loans or Alternative Loans	With the soaring costs of a four year college education, some students seek additional loans	Be a smart consumer, look for loans with the lowest interest rates and best repayment options

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Basic College Grants and Scholarships

Sources of Aid	Monetary Value	How to Apply
College Scholarships	Varies - some are need-based, others merit-based	Complete the FAFSA, CSS Profile and/or individual colleges' own financial aid application
Federal Pell Grant	Varies- based on financial needs	Complete the FAFSA
Federal Supplemental Educational	Varies -based on financial need	Complete the FAFSA Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)	Varies based upon financial need, TAP can only be used in New York State	Complete FAFSA and TAP applications
National Merit & National	Varies	Your junior year PSAT/NMSQT result Achievement Scholarships
Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)	Varies, eligibility is based on BOTH academic and economic criteria	Educationally and students attending a SUNY college economically disadvantaged
Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP)	Varies, eligibility is based on BOTH academic and economic criteria	Educationally and economically disadvantaged students attending private colleges in New York State
ROTC Scholarships (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps)	Pays for tuition, books, fees, and other expenses	Please visit www.rotc.com

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COLLEGE PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Check list of required/optional items for college application before I submit my application:

1. _____ I have reviewed the college website/catalog carefully.
2. _____ I have visited the campus.
3. _____ I have met with an admissions representative in the college office or at a college fair.
4. _____ I have checked that the college offers the programs I am interested in.
5. _____ I have taken all required standardized tests (SAT, SAT Subjects and/ACT plus Writing)
6. _____ I am ready to send my standardized test scores to all of the colleges where they are required.
7. _____ I have filled out and updated the SSR Survey online (Common App)
8. _____ If applying Early Action or Early Decision, I have entered my choice(s) on Naviance
9. _____ I have included this college on my Common App list.
10. _____ I have included this college on my Naviance list.
11. _____ I have met with my college counselor.
12. _____ I know the deadlines for submitting all of my college applications.
13. _____ I have completed my essay(s).
14. _____ I have completed my colleges' supplemental applications.
15. _____ I have checked my high school transcript carefully and submitted necessary corrections.
16. _____ My family and I are prepared to complete all required financial aid forms (CSS profile, FAFSA...)
17. _____ I have verbally requested two teacher recommendations two weeks in advance (providing each teacher with a transcript and resume), and made the request through Naviance.

Things to Do after Receiving Acceptances:

1. _____ My acceptance deposit has been sent to the college I will be attending.
2. _____ I have withdrawn from colleges that have accepted me but that I am not going to attend.
3. _____ I have completed my housing request form.
4. _____ I have found off-campus housing, if necessary.
5. _____ I have completed any requested pre-registration materials.
6. _____ I have received my TAP award certificate, for a college in New York State.

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Useful Resources

Many of the following books are available in the school library, public libraries and local bookstores

- *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*. Barron's Educational Series.
- *The Best 380 Colleges*. The Princeton Review.
- *Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think About Colleges*. Loren Pope.
- *The Princeton Review: Guide to College Majors*. (2005 version available for free on Google Books)
- *College Board: College Handbook*. The College Board.
- *College Cost Book*. The College Board.
- *College Handbook, Index of Majors*. The College Board.
- *Comparative Guide to American Colleges*. Harper and Row.
- *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*. Edward B. Fiske.
- *Guide to College Majors*. Chronicle Guidance Publications, Inc.
- *How to Get an Ivy League Education at a State University*. Avon Books.
- *Looking Beyond the Ivy League: Finding the College That's Right for You*. Loren Pope
- *Peterson's Competitive Colleges*. Peterson's Guides.
- *Peterson's Guide to Colleges with Programs for Learning Disabled Students*. Peterson's Guides.
- *Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges*. Peterson's Guides, Inc.
- *U.S. News & World Report Ultimate College Guide*. U.S. News & World Report.
- *You Can Afford College: The Family Guide to Meeting College Costs*. Doubleday Dell.

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More Resources: Helpful

Websites

College Information, Financial Aid Information, and Scholarship Search Tools:

- Naviance Family Connection - <https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=mcsm>
- College Results Online- www.collegeresults.org
- Federal Aid - www.fafsa.ed.gov
- New York State Aid – www.hesc.com
- Scholarship search service – www.fastweb.com
- Expected Family Contribution (EFC) Calculator/Estimator - <http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/>
- EFC Calculator (estimator) for CSS Profile (when prompted to “Pick a Formula”, choose “Institutional Methodology”) - http://apps.collegeboard.com/fincalc/efc_welcome.jsp
- <http://studentaid.ed.gov>
- www.finaid.org
- www.scholarships.com
- The College Board – www.collegeboard.org
- Common Application - www.commonapp.org
- National Survey of Student Engagement - http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/pocket_guide_intro.cfm
- www.princetonreview.com
- <http://www.usnews.com/education>
- www.nacacnet.org
- www.collegeview.com
- www.collegeanswer.com
- www.collegedata.com
- www.ecampustours.com
- <http://www.ucan-network.org/>
- www.meritaid.com

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