

Junior Parent Night: The College Application Process

February 20, 2025



MWHS School Counselors



Maggie Carlson: Grades 8-9



Tina Kampa: Grades 10-12 A-K



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Tonight's Topics

- Immediate reminders for remainder of junior year
- College application Timelines
- College application Specifics



Immediate Reminders

- **College Admission Testing**

- Check prospective colleges for admission testing requirements (ACT, SAT)
- ACT: www.act.org
- SAT: www.collegeboard.org
- Can take multiple times
- Take advantage of option to send scores to college free of charge through registration process

- **College rep visits throughout the spring at MWHS**

- Will pick up again in April/May
- Students can sign up to visit with a rep; visits are typically scheduled during WIN



ACT Testing Information

District ACT:

- Thursday, March 13: Starts at 8:20
- Online, school issued Chromebook
- Preadministration tasks are completed during WIN on 2/27 with counselors via student ACT online account.
- \$20 fee - paid through Skyward, due Feb. 23th
- Items to bring:
 - School issued Chromebook (fully charged),
 - Photo ID
 - Approved calculator (available online)
 - Food/drink to be accessed during break

National ACT Test Dates:

- Students register online at www.act.org
- Test dates this year:
 - April 13
 - June 14
 - July 12
- Registration is typically due one month prior
- Cost:
 - No Writing \$65
 - Plus Writing \$90
 - Plus Science \$94



Prep and Practice Materials - District online test

Students have been preparing for
11 years!



- Taking the ACT Test - Spring 2025
 - Link above and hard copy received at preadministration session
- Preparing for the ACT Online using
 - Link above, specific to online test
- Practice Tests through TestNav
 - Available on Chromebooks
 - Same testing platform used on test day
- Practice tests through MCIS
 - Students login through Clever
 - 3 practice tests per subject

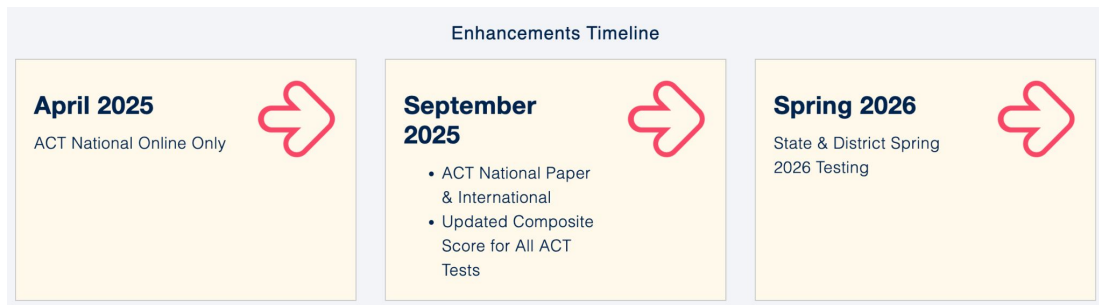
ACT Test Enhancements

What is changing:

- Reduced number of overall questions - 44 fewer
- Reduced test length - composite score after 125 minutes of testing, rather than up to 195.
- More time per question.
- Reduced number of answer choices in math questions from five to four.
- Students will be able to take the ACT National test with or without science section.

What is NOT changing:

- The ACT score scale will remain 1-36
- Scores from tests taken prior to the rollout of the new Composite score will not change.
- ACT Benchmarks: ability to predict success in first-year college credit-bearing courses will not change.
- Both paper-and-pencil and online tests will continue to be available.



ACT and College Admissions

- ACT was NOT required for most schools for the class of 2025
- Most colleges are test optional through class of 2025; students should check the college website for specific information
- If students do not submit an ACT, they should assume that other parts (rigor, GPA Activities) will weigh more heavily in the admission decision.
- Students should consider “traditional ACT requirements” when deciding if they should include their ACT score. If it will help their application, they should include it.



Not sure if a 4 year college track is right for your student?

ICATT Apprenticeship Program: helps manufacturers and companies attack the talent shortage with a sustainable solution that provides a pipeline of talent.

Luther Technical Training Center: fast track technical training center that focuses on automotive technology. Leads to Master Technician certification.

Dunwoody Monthly Open Houses: experience what a vocational school experience would look like

Hennepin Technical College Weekly Tours: available at both campuses

Minneapolis College Open House: experience community college and vocational opportunities



Timeline through first semester senior year:

- **Now:** continue to complete college visits (virtually or in person), take ACT, refine list of colleges
- **End of Junior year:** Check transcript. Make sure all high school graduation requirements are accounted for.
- **Summer:** application prep: consider recommenders if required, brainstorm essay topics
- **Late August/Early September:** Applications open - review requirements and begin the process. Note deadlines.



Timeline through first semester senior year:

- **September-October:** complete and submit applications (early deadlines)
- **October 1:** FAFSA opens. Watch for a Financial Aid Information Night date in late September. Research national scholarship opportunities through places of employment, scholarship search sites, service organizations, etc.
- **November-January:** Await admissions decisions and confirm enrollment



Senior Year Preview

- Fall: Applications/Visits
- Fall/Winter: Financial Aid process
 - Financial Aid Information Night - late September
 - FAFSA - available Oct. 1st.
 - CSS Profile (if required)
 - National Scholarship Applications
- Winter/Spring:
 - Confirm enrollment through tuition and housing deposits
 - Local Scholarship application available January/February



What makes an application complete?

- Application submitted
- Application fee paid
- Transcript sent (through Parchment)*
- Standardized test scores sent

*Students using the Common Application do not need to send a transcript through Parchment



Be aware of different deadlines:

Rolling Decision: Applications will be reviewed as they are accepted

Regular Decision: Applications are due on a certain date and reviewed in no particular order

Early Action: Students apply by certain date and are guaranteed a decision by a certain date

Early Decision: Apply by a certain date and get a decision by a certain date. THIS IS BINDING. Upon Acceptance, the student must withdraw all other application at other institutions.



Different Types of Applications

- **Institutional Application:** published by the college or university only for that particular college or college system (e.g. Wisconsin or Minnesota university system).
- **Common Application:** a general application that many colleges use for admission. General information is shareable but colleges might have supplemental requirements.
- **Coalition Application:** general application that is used by other institutions. The Coalition App is meant to be more of a portfolio tool aimed at equal access for high school seniors. (rarely used)



Institutional App

- Typically available on the admissions website of the colleges. Look for an “apply now” button
- Will require account set up
- Requirements will vary by college
 - Academic history/current classes
 - Essay
 - Letters of recommendation/recommendation forms
 - Counselor forms



Common Application

- Available at www.commonapp.org (typically August 15)
- Need to respond to at least 1 of 7 essay topics
- Supplemental application materials available once students “assign colleges” to their account
- Secondary School Report (completed by counselor)
- Teacher Evaluation Form (teacher will get an email when they are assigned)
- Counselor Form (counselor will get an email when they are assigned)



Essays

- An opportunity to bring the applicant to life and share what is NOT in other areas of the application
- Recommended to stay away from talking about a sport/activity unless you are going to talk about a specific personal characteristic or skill that was developed
- Students should be comfortable with doing multiple drafts and digging into the “micro” aspects of things
- How does this narrative make you stand out against other applicants and contribute to their campus



- ☐ Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- ☐ The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- ☐ Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- ☐ Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
- ☐ Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- ☐ Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
- ☐ Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.



University of St. Thomas Supplement Example

It is important to St. Thomas that everyone understands the role they play in creating an inclusive environment on campus and in the broader community. Please share your thoughts and personal experience with diversity, equity and inclusion. Address topics like socioeconomic status, race, ability, sexual orientation or other examples. Most importantly, speak from the heart.



University of Wisconsin Supplement Example

Tell us why you decided to apply to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In addition, please include why you are interested in studying the major(s) you have selected. If you selected undecided please describe your areas of possible academic interest. (you may enter up to 650 words). *



Letters of Recommendation

- Not all colleges require a recommendation: check before asking
- Recommendation form: might be required INSTEAD of a letter
- Give recommender at least two weeks to write a letter or complete form
- Request in person with a "Recommendation Form" available for reference (should be done before assigned in Common App)
- Thank the recommender via a thank you note
- Brainstorm with your student about core teachers they have had that would make good recommenders for their possible area of study



Helpful Steps You Can Take Now

- Get on campuses: this helps adolescents move from conceptual to literal
- Brainstorm ways to approach the essay (keep a list in your phone)
- Brainstorm who might be a good recommender (core teachers 11th/12th grade)
 - Practice behaviors in and out of the classroom that would warrant a good recommendation
- Develop a list of top 10 activities in grades 9-12
 - This can include jobs, clubs, school sports, club sports, volunteerism—anything done outside of school time



Don't Forget...

- Parents, teachers, counselors should be supporting characters in this process, not have the starring role.
- Students should be the person who contacts admissions with questions--not parents. Help them write an effective email from their own account.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions that are specific to your family situation directly to financial aid or admissions-they are there to help



New for the Class of 2026!

Direct Admission Minnesota

- Qualified Seniors will be offered automatic admission based on academic record at participating colleges/universities (50+) in Minnesota
- Students will need to identify the institutions that they would like to hear from and “opt in” to the process
- Colleges will still require an application, but invited students will know before submitting that they were admitted
- More information coming in the late Spring; please encourage your student to review and complete the form when it comes



Thank you!



Westonka
PUBLIC SCHOOLS