

*Alexander Hamilton
High School*

*College Information
Guide
2012-2013*



College Planner

Applying to college can be a scary and exciting time in the lives of high school students. The anxiety and doubt can sometimes over-cloud this positive learning experience. Please remember that you are not alone in this process. Your parents/guardians must be part of this journey and your counselors are here to educate and comfort you through this time. This planner is a step-by-step guide to help you make the right choices in your college pursuit. Please start early and ask lots of questions. We hope the following information is helpful and that you become a familiar face in the guidance office. Understanding the process will help ease your anxiety and help you make the best decisions for yourself.

Monica Ahern
Guidance Counselor
(914)592-4884
mahern@elmsd.org

Stephanie Luccioni
Guidance Counselor
(914)592-8598
sluccioni@elmsd.org



Junior Year Calendar

March

- ✓ Register for May SAT on www.collegeboard.com
- ✓ Complete resume on *Naviance*
- ✓ Meet with counselor to discuss possible colleges
- ✓ Research possible schools by exploring school websites. You can take virtual tours on many of them

April

- ✓ Visit Colleges during spring break
- ✓ Continue to meet with counselor about college planning
- ✓ Continue to research schools online and Naviance

May

- ✓ Take SAT and or ACT
- ✓ Ask 2 teachers to write you a recommendation
- ✓ If you are a student athlete, begin certification process with NCAA Clearinghouse
- ✓ Make a tentative list of schools to visit during the summer and fall
- ✓ Call colleges to make appointments for interviews, tours, and information sessions

June

- ✓ Prepare for final/Regents exams
- ✓ Take SAT subject tests, if appropriate

July/August

- ✓ Continue to research schools
- ✓ Finalize resume
- ✓ Begin looking at college essays on school websites
- ✓ Summer is a great time to explore options for your future. Get a job, volunteer, travel, take a class on a college campus, read some great books, try something new!

Senior Year Calendar

September

- ✓ Meet with counselor to finalize college list
- ✓ Ask counselor for a copy of your transcript to review credits and senior year classes
- ✓ Check SAT and or ACT test dates. Register for October or November SAT and or ACT
- ✓ Attend College Fairs
- ✓ Check with teachers that your recommendations are ready
- ✓ Begin applications for any school you may apply early decision

October

- ✓ Take SAT and or ACT
- ✓ Take SAT subject test if appropriate
- ✓ Prepare applications for SUNY and CUNY schools
- ✓ Send all test scores officially through collegeboard
- ✓ Complete essay and have your essay reviewed by your English teacher
- ✓ Make sure recommendations and proper Common Application forms are on file in guidance office
- ✓ Attend Fall College Fairs

November

- ✓ Take the SAT and or ACT
- ✓ All SUNY and CUNY applications are due before Thanksgiving break.
- ✓ Send all test scores officially through collegeboard
- ✓ Keep deadline dates for applications in mind for applications
- ✓ Complete interviews and college visits
- ✓ Continue to work on all on applications
- ✓ REMEMBER: IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK APPLICATION DEADLINES!

December

- ✓ All remaining applications are due in the guidance office
- ✓ Send all test scores officially through collegeboard
- ✓ **Make sure ALL applications with a January 1st or 15th deadline are submitted to the guidance office by the second week of December. The guidance office as well as school admissions will be closed during the December break. We ask that it is submitted two weeks before break so that we have the necessary time to process your application.**
- ✓ Attend the Guidance Department Financial Aid Night

January

- ✓ File Financial Aid Forms as soon as possible after Jan. 1st
- ✓ Listen to announcements and visit guidance office for scholarships
- ✓ Keep your counselor informed of any correspondence from your college. If you receive a letter or email indicating that they have not received your transcript or recommendations, please call the college first to confirm that something is missing. Many times the documents are crossed in the mail with the documents. If they still are missing a piece of your application, please inform the guidance office.
- ✓ Keep working hard in the classroom. **FIRST SEMESTER GRADES ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

February

- ✓ Notify counselor informed of any acceptances and or denials
- ✓ Music majors should arrange for auditions
- ✓ Art majors should complete portfolios
- ✓ Research scholarship opportunities

March

- ✓ Visit colleges for final decision making
- ✓ Be certain that all applications and tests have been completed

April

- ✓ Continue to seek scholarship awards
- ✓ Notify colleges to which you applied either stating your intention of acceptance or informing colleges that you will not attend. This will give students on waiting lists a chance to attend

May

- ✓ **** FINAL DECISION!!! **** Candidate Final Reply Date is usually May 1
- ✓ Send deposit to one school
- ✓ Complete all materials that were sent to you from college such as health forms and room/board
- ✓ Notify the Guidance Office of final decision so that a final transcript will be sent to the school of your choice

June

- ✓ Congratulations Graduates!

Post-Secondary Education

University: An institution which offers undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees.

College: An institution which offers study toward a two or four year undergraduate degree.

Career and Technical Colleges: Primarily two- year schools that offer technical or specialty programs such as home health aid, plumbing, carpentry, plumbing, culinary arts, etc.

United States Military Academies: Four-year institutions which offer programs leading to the B.S. degree as well as officer rank. Application for the military academics should be started in the spring of the junior year. The U.S. Military Academy at West Point(Army), U.S. Air Force Academy(Air Force), U.S. Naval Academy(Navy), U.S. Coast Guard Academy(Coast Guard).

Community College: A two- year institution that is publicly supported and offers associate degrees and one year certificates. Many community colleges do not offer on-campus housing.

Junior College: A private two year institution which offers study leading to an Associate degree.

Business School: A private school which offers one or two year degree and non-degree programs in the field of business.

Vocational School: An institution that provides specialized training leading to certificate or a diploma rather than a degree (e.g. computer school, diesel driving school)

Naviance

What is Naviance?

Naviance is a web-based program that links AHHS counselors with students and parents to improve career and college planning.

- provides a powerful link between school and home
- customized to save students personal profile
- secure website that supports planning and advising at AHHS.

How Can Students Use It?

CAREER PLANNING

- Learning Styles Inventory
- Interest Inventory
- Personality Inventory
- Write Resume
- Updates from Guidance Office

COLLEGE PLANNING

- College selection research
- College Major Research
- Create a “Game Plan” for life after AHHS
- College Profile Exploration
- National and local scholarships
- Updates from Guidance Office

Login:

www.connection.naviance.com/alexanderhhs

The guidance department has met with the students to set up their accounts. If you have not set up an account or have misplaced your username or password, please see your counselor.

Processing Your Application:

Parts of the application:

- ✓ The actual application
- ✓ The required essays
- ✓ Your transcript
- ✓ Counselor recommendation
- ✓ Teacher recommendations (2)
- ✓ Application Fee
- ✓ Student resume

These days, most schools prefer students to complete the application online. Students need to fill out the application online and then come into Guidance to fill out a **TRANSCRIPT REQUEST FORM**.

All students need two teacher recommendations and one counselor recommendation. We advise that students ask two teachers for a recommendation before summer break of their junior year. This will give the teachers enough time to write a well-thought, personal recommendation. Teachers will write only one letter per student. The guidance office will photo copy and send it to each school the student applies to. If the student is using The Common Application, please print out the *Secondary School Report and Teacher Evaluation* from the downloadable forms section on the Common Application Website. Give the Secondary School Report to your counselor and the Teacher report to **one** of the teachers that wrote your recommendation.

Once you have applied online and given Guidance a transcript request form, the Guidance office will send the following to the colleges:

1. Transcript
2. Teacher and counselor recommendations
3. School profile
4. Resume (if it was not sent through application)

The last step is to send your SAT scores officially to each college that you have applied to through www.collegeboard.com

REMEMBER

Keep deadlines in mind so that hurried applications do not become a necessity.

Types of Applications

Most applications can be located on the college or university's website. Some schools still offer paper applications, but most often online applications are most popular and preferred by schools.

The Common Application

Completing applications for several schools can be quite a chore. Many schools have joined forces to provide a single application that can be completed once and duplicated several times. The Common Application is accepted at many, but not all, colleges and universities. You can see the entire list of schools on The Common Application website. www.commonapp.org

If more than one of the schools to which you are applying does accept The Common Application and chose to use it, this means that you complete your part only once, and will send a copy of it to each school you apply to. Please be sure to include the appropriate fee for each college. Fees are listed on the Common Application website. This also means that your counselor will only complete the School Report Form only once and teachers will fill out the Teacher Recommendation Form only once as well.

Please make sure that you print out the following pieces of the Common Application from the **Downloadable Forms** section of the Common Application website and give to your counselor after completing the application:

- ✓ Secondary School Report
- ✓ Teacher Recommendation Form
- ✓ Mid-Year Report
- ✓ Final Report

Many colleges require supplements to the Common Application. These supplements will be on the website as well.

SUNY Application

Many SUNY (State University of New York) schools are available on the Common Application. If you choose to use the SUNY application at www.suny.edu, please make sure you click on the supplemental section to see if the college you are applying to has one.

CUNY Application

All CUNY (City University of New York) schools must be completed on the CUNY website, www.cuny.edu. You can apply up to 6 schools on the one application for the flat fee of \$65.

What Does a College Look For in an Applicant?

A college is not looking for one particular factor in an applicant. Selection of a freshman class is a complex task which depends upon many factors. Admissions counselors seek applicants who are capable of enriching the college at the same time as they are capable of gaining enrichment from the college. Each applicant must put together a package of his or her many strong points so that the application is seen in its most positive form. The criteria, which must be included in each applicant's package, in a neat and clear manner is listed below.

ACADEMIC RECORD

- Grade Point Average-Not only the grades themselves, but also what courses were taken to receive those grades
- Type of Curriculum-What was the quality of the course work?
 - Were the courses Regents, honors?
 - Did the student take AP courses?
 - Quality of the senior year program
 - Has the student continued to maintain a difficult schedule of course work?

** It should be noted that while various schools use different priorities in choosing their freshman class, the vast majority give priority to the academic record, particularly the grades earned in the major subjects: English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science and Second Language.

STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES

- How did the student score on SAT's and/or ACT's?
- Has the student taken SAT II tests to show achievement in specific areas of the curriculum?

SENIOR YEAR GRADES

- The grades received in the senior year give the applicant the opportunity to show the colleges what he/she is capable of achieving, and that there is motivation for success. While the senior year can not change weak credentials in grades 9, 10 and 11, it can indicate that a student has matured and should be given consideration. For those seniors who already have good credentials, a good first semester is important.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Has the student given a great deal of time and energy to an athletic endeavor?
- Has the student shown leadership qualities through work on a newspaper, in a volunteer organization?
- Does this student spend several hours a day working outside of school?

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Have the teachers and/or counselor given this student particularly strong recommendations?

SPECIAL INFORMATION

This information should be conveyed to the college admissions office:

- Do you have a special talent which makes you unique (e.g., proficiency in a second language, ability in one of the performing arts, a great deal of travel experience)?
- Have you done some extraordinary independent study (research in a scientific field, computer work)?
- Have you had an unusual summer activity?

ESSAY

***** NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF AN ESSAY *****

The essay is of extreme importance and can be the decisive factor in many college applications. Essays should not be done in a hurried fashion. The essay should be a “masterpiece” which displays your best qualities of character as well as your writing ability. Whatever your talent is, the essay should reflect who you are, how you feel about life. This is your personal statement which gives a verbal picture of you for the admissions committee.

Your written picture will describe your personality, ability, motivation and how much you care about getting accepted to college. Your writing is an example of your emotional and intellectual capabilities and of how much time and effort you put into this portion of your application. Answer the exact question that has been asked while making sure that you, the individual, come through in the answer.

INTERVIEW

- How did the student appear at the interview?
- Was his/her dress appropriate?
- Did he/she conduct himself/herself in a mature manner?
- Has the student done his/her homework insofar as the college was concerned?
- Did the student know enough about the college to know it was a place he/she would like to attend?
- Is the student able to answer questions about himself/herself and why he/she would like to study at this college?
- Can the student answer why this is the “right” college for him/her?
- Was the student prepared for the interview?

Always make sure to send a letter of thank you after an interview. A sample letter is included in this handbook.

What Should You Look For in a College?

- SIZE:** Do I want a school with several hundred or several thousand students?
- LOCATION:** Do I want to live in or near a big city?
Do I want to be within a certain distance from home?
Do I like a warm climate or would I rather be near ski country?
Do I want to live off campus or in dormitory housing?
- TYPE:** Am I interested primarily in a public or private institution?
Do I want a school that specializes in a particular area of study?
Do I want a college with a religious orientation?
- STUDENT BODY:** What is the geographic distribution of the student body?
Do many of the students live on campus or do most of them commute to school?
Are most of the students from one part of the country?
- COMPETITIVENESS:** What grade point average is the college looking for?
Do I fit into its median SAT or ACT scores?
Do I need SAT II tests?
- SPECIALIZATION:** Does the college fulfill my special need in the curriculum area?
Can I take a cooperative work-study program if I want to?
Can I take a dual major?
- SPECIAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENT:** Do I need specific high school subjects for admission to the program of my choice?
What standardized tests should I take for admissions?
Does this college require interviews?
Are these interviews on campus or alumni interviews?
Are there music or drama auditions required?
- FINANCES:** What are the overall financial costs of each college?
Are there opportunities for financial assistance available?
- FACILITIES:** Are there athletic facilities for my needs?
Will I be able to get plenty of computer time?
Will the laboratory facilities fulfill my requirements for study and research?
Are the dormitories adequate for my housing needs?
Is the library a comfortable place to study as well as an adequate research facility?
- CAMPUS LIFE:** What kind of extracurricular activities are available for me?

CAMPUS LIFE: Are there interscholastic and intramural athletics?
Are there fraternities and sororities?
Are they an important part of campus life?
Does the Student Union have recreational facilities?
Are there cultural events on campus?

These are just a few of the questions you will want answered as you research the colleges for you. You may also want to know about:

- A Professional Advisory Committee if you are considering graduate school
- Counseling Services if you are having any study skills problems
- Study Abroad programs
- The possibilities for cross enrollment in nearby colleges
- The strength of placement services for career placement upon graduation
- The ROTC programs available on campus

One of the best ways to learn about a college is to visit the campus. Plan to make a visit during the school year when classes are in session. Many colleges schedule campus tours.

During your visit, walk around campus and get a feeling for its size and atmosphere. Find out about the things that are important to you. Visit the student center, the cafeteria, the dormitories and the library. Talk to the students wherever you go.

If the college recommends that applicants have an interview, schedule it for the same time you visit the campus.

There are a few things that should not come into consideration at the present time. One is selection of school because some of your high school friends are planning on being there. While they may be good friends, their needs for higher education may not be the same as yours. So what is best for your future may not be what is best for theirs.

Another consideration that should be put off for a while is the financial aspects of college. While you may be realistic about the cost of college, avoid worrying about costs during the first stages of the application process. The final decision will not be made until April or May and by then, financial aid information will be forthcoming to help in the decision-making process.

Do's and Don'ts of Writing Your College Essay

DO start early. Leave plenty of time to revise, reword, and rewrite. You can always improve.

DO read the directions carefully. Answer the questions as directly as possible. Express yourself as clearly as you can.

DO tell the truth about yourself

DO show your best side. You might have overcome some adversity, worked through a difficult project, or profited from a specific incident. A specific focus is more interesting than generalizations.

DO feel comfortable in expressing anxieties. Everybody has them, and it's good to know that an applicant can see them and face them.

DO tie yourself to the college. Be specific about what this particular school can do for you, and what you will bring to their student body. Your essay can have different slants for different colleges.

DO speak positively. Negatives tend to turn people off.

DO reveal yourself in your writing and about your greatest assets and achievements. You should be proud of them.

DO write in your own "voice" and style.

BUT.....

DON'T repeat information given elsewhere on your application. The committee has already seen it, and it may look as though you have nothing to say.

DON'T write on general, impersonal topics such as global warming. The colleges want to know about YOU.

DON'T exaggerate or write to impress.

DON'T use the personal statement to excuse shortcoming. It will only draw attention to them.

DON'T use clichés or a flowery, inflated, or pretentious style.

DON'T go to extremes-too witty, too opinionated, or too "intellectual".

REMEMBER.....

The personal statement is yours. If it looks like Madison Avenue, the admissions committee will probably assume that it is your mother or father's work.

A "gimmick" essay rarely goes anywhere. The committee may be amused, but unimpressed.

Write a serious essay, from the bottom of your heart, in the most mature manner possible. The following examples are essays taken from REAL ESSAYS THAT WORKED by Fiske and Hammond. They will help you understand how to write your own essay.

Sample Essay Questions **Found on College Applications**

Example One

The essay section of the admission application is an opportunity to help us become acquainted with you through a means different from courses, grades, test scores and other objective data. It enables you to demonstrate your ability to organize thoughts and express yourself. With these objectives in mind, please write an essay about one of the topics listed below:

1. Describe a significant experience or achievement that has meaning to you.
2. Discuss some issue of personal, local or national concern and its importance to you.
3. If you could travel through time and interview any historical figure, whom would you choose, what would you ask, and why?

Example Two

It is our aim to get to know you as well as possible through this application. With this in mind, please describe in detail some special interest, experience, achievement or anything else you would like us to know about you. Essays on personal, local or national issues that are of particular concern to you are also welcomed.

Example Three

In order to acquaint us with you, please write a personal statement including your reasons for applying to _____, your interests and any other information you wish to give about yourself. Indicate any career plans you might have. Please take time to prepare a thorough statement. The Admissions Committee requires this information when reviewing your application.

Example Four

It will aid us in reading your application if you will explain in some detail your interest in the field that you wish to pursue at _____, and how you intend to develop that interest in college and beyond.

Example Five

Why do you think _____ is an appropriate place for you to continue your education?

The following examples are essays taken from Real Essays That Worked by Fiske and Hammond.

Standardized Tests

Every secondary school has its own system of grading. Therefore, it is a difficult task for a college to compare the students at Alexander Hamilton with an applicant from another school in another city or state. Standardized tests give the college common criteria to use for comparing the applicants.

Every college has its own requirements for standardized tests. You must check with the colleges you will be applying to in order to know which standardized tests you will need to complete your application requirements.

There are a few basic points to keep in mind where standardized tests are concerned:

- Plan to take the SAT I or ACT twice, once in the Spring of junior year and at least once in the Fall of your senior year.
- The Alexander Hamilton code is **331840**.
- Scores are returned about four to six weeks after the test date
- Not all tests are given at all test centers. The Collegeboard website provides all information on test dates and centers.
- You can take either a SAT I or SAT II on a given day, but you cannot take both on the same day.
- There is no quick way to develop the skill of reading and understanding material. You can improve your reading ability through habitual reading of all kinds of materials.
- Preparation courses are valuable in helping students to become familiar with the test format. Our school offers SAT preparation during the school day. Test anxiety may be lessened as the student learns better test techniques.

Basic Differences between SAT and ACT

- The ACT includes a science reasoning test; the SAT does not.
- The ACT math section includes trigonometry.
- The SAT tests vocabulary much more than the ACT.
- The SAT is not entirely multiple choice.
- The SAT has a guessing penalty; the ACT does not.
- The ACT tests English grammar; the SAT does not.

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Qualifying Test)

All juniors should take this test in the Fall of their Junior year. Many sophomores take the PSAT to familiarize themselves with the format of the test. It gives the student a rough estimate of his/her future SAT scores and points out the student's strengths and weaknesses so that further preparation may raise future scores. The NMSQT Selection Index (twice the verbal score plus math score) determines the minimum score to receive national recognition for National Merit Scholarship

SAT I (Scholastic Aptitude Test)

This test is designed to measure verbal and mathematical reasoning. It should be taken in junior year and again in senior year. It is a required test for admission to many colleges since it is used to supplement the secondary school record.

SAT II (Subject Test)

SAT II's are designed to test the level of knowledge of a student in a particular academic discipline. Each SAT II test is one hour long on a specific subject. It is generally a good idea to take an SAT II upon completion of the subject. Highly selective colleges usually require or recommend specific subject tests. Some colleges consider them as factors in the admissions; others use them to place students in the appropriate level of work when they enroll. SAT II's are given in the following subject areas:

AMERICAN HISTORY	GERMAN
BIOLOGY	HEBREW
CHEMISTRY	ITALIAN
ENGLISH COMPOSITION	LATIN
EUROPEAN HISTORY (WORLD CULTURES)	SPANISH
FRENCH	MATHEMATICS (LEVEL I AND II)

****Be sure to determine specific admissions testing criteria for the colleges you are applying to.

ACT (American College Testing Program)

This standardized test is usually accepted in lieu of the SAT I. It is the student's responsibility to check if the ACT is accepted at a particular school. It is a multiple choice test score reported on a scale of 1 to 36 for each individual test portion and on a composite average. The four curriculums measured include English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning.

PUT TO THE TEST: PREPARING FOR THE SAT/ACT

It's Not as Bad as You Think

Standardized tests can be scary and all the hype about test scores doesn't help.

SAT and ACT test scores are important. But they're not nearly as important as many Students think. Colleges use test scores differently, but no college makes admission Decisions based solely on them. In fact, your academic record (the courses you've taken and the grades you've received) is looked at much more closely than your test scores.

A Proven Way to Boost Your Score

There's no way to get around it – the best ways to prepare for the SAT and ACT are to study hard and read as much as you can.

A great way to improve your score is by reading. But, the only way you're going to get anything out of reading is to choose books, magazines, and newspapers that you enjoy – everything from *Harry Potter* to the *New York Times* can strengthen your reading comprehension and vocabulary.

Practicing writing is also important in your preparation. Whether you're writing a research paper for history or working on your own short stories, it's a great way to get ready for these tests.

Test-Taking Strategies

Test-taking skills can be learned through practice. Try a few of these strategies to improve your performance on standardized tests.

- Take the practice test in the materials you receive from the SAT or ACT.
- Find practice tests online or in books (check your Guidance office or library).
- After taking a practice test, look carefully at the questions you get wrong. Read the explanations of the right answers.
- If you find that certain types of questions or certain topics stump you, get some help from a teacher in those areas. For example, a math teacher can recommend a good book to review the basics of geometry or algebra.
- Learn from every test you take. Take the opportunity to see the answers for the questions you got wrong, if the testing service offers this. Don't just study the answers themselves – look at the reasoning behind each answer. Then, if you decide to take the test again, you'll be better prepared.

2012 SAT and ACT Test Dates

SAT

Test Date	Regular Registration	Fee	Late Registration	Fee	Changes due by
May 5	April 6	\$49	April 20	\$75	April 18
June 2	May 8	\$49	May 22	\$75	May 16

***Fall schedule not posted at this time. Please refer to www.collegeboard.com to check fall test dates

SAT II - \$22

ACT

Test Date	Regular Registration	Fee	Late Registration	Fee
June 9	May 14	\$34	May 18	\$55
Sept. 8	Aug. 17	\$34	Aug. 24	\$55
Oct. 27	Sept. 21	\$34	Oct. 5	\$55
Dec. 8	Nov. 2	\$34	Nov. 16	\$55

ACT Plus Writing Exam -\$49

The College Interview

The interview personalizes the application process. However, while interviews may be required, recommended or optional in many schools, they may not be offered at others.

May take place either on campus or locally with an alumnus of the college, allows for an exchange of information both ways, and expresses your seriousness of purpose.

Preparation

Take stock of your personal strength and become knowledgeable of the college. Prepare questions you would like to ask the college counselor.

Guidelines for Interview

Communicate personal qualities. Show confidence and poise, and explain your weakness in your application. Dress neatly, be prompt, be honest, remember the counselor's name, relax and be yourself. Always remember to send a thank you letter to the counselor.

Questions Interviewers Ask

Why are you considering this college?

What are your extracurricular activities outside of school and in the school?

How do you define success?

What can you contribute to this college?

What can you tell me about yourself?

What are your future plans?

What events were critical in your development?

What has been your most significant contribution to your school or community?

What do you expect to achieve in college?

Where else have you applied to college?

Questions to Ask the Interviewer

What are the smallest and largest first year classes?

What is student housing like?

What are the food services options?

Are your facilities capable to the industries of the working world?

How much academic pressure is there your first year? Is there any support?

How diverse is the student body?

How is the social life on campus organized?

Do you have intramural teams for those who are not on a team?

What kind of personal qualities do students as a whole tend to have here?

Sample Letter of Thank you After Your Interview

Your Address
City, State, Zip Code

Date

Director of Admissions
Name of College
Address of College
City, State, Zip Code

Dear _____:

I would like to thank you for your time and personal interest during my visit to your campus on (specific day and date). (Remind person of something specific which happened or was mentioned during the interview, e. g., I certainly enjoyed our discussion on team sports and appreciate how much we had in common in that area).

Again, thank you for a most interesting and informative meeting.

Sincerely,

FULL NAME

Sample Letter for Teacher Recommendation Request

March 2012

Dear _____,

I am applying for admission to college next year. We are required to submit 2 letters of recommendation from teachers. Would you consider writing me a letter of recommendation? I have attached a resume, to assist you in writing my letter. Since I am currently undecided as to where I am applying, you can write a general "To Whom It May Concern" letter. The guidance department would like for you to return the letter to them, no later than October 1.

Thank you. I really appreciate you taking the time to help me.

Sincerely,

Name of Student

College Application Terms

Accreditation

Recognition granted to an institution of higher education by an official accrediting agency such as the state or region.

AP

Advance Placement Test. Test designed for the students in Advance Placement courses to determine whether or not they may gain advanced standing in a given subject.

Associate Degree

Two year program you will receive when attending college and receiving 60 credits, mostly seen in Community College.

Bachelor Degree

Four year program while attending college, Bachelor of Arts, or a Bachelor of Science

CEEB Code

Each school has its own code. This code is required on all college applications and on the SAT I and II applications. The code for Alexander Hamilton is 331-840.

Common Application

Over 100 colleges have worked together to develop a Common Application. They encourage its use and make no distinction between it and the college's form. It must be complete only once. Copies may be sent to any number of participating institutions.

Community/Junior College

A two year institution which offers a program enabling a student to transfer to a year program and or receive an associate degree

Cooperative Education

A combined program of both work and study leading to a college degree

CSS

College Scholarship Service. The organization analyzes the Profile Aid Form and determines need. CSS provides guidelines to the financial aid office for the offering funds.

CUNY

City University of New York. A network of colleges including four year, specialized and community colleges. All New York State residents are admitted on the same basis as those residing in New York City.

Deferred Admission (college)

On early decision applications, admission action is deferred to reevaluation at a later date.

Deferred Admission (student)

An admitted student may delay or defer enrollment into a college for one year or one semester with a guarantee of admission at the time he/she chooses.

Early Action

An application for an early offer of admission which permits the accepted candidate to wait until May 1st to accept or decline the offer of admission. Students are not bound to a single application under this plan as they are with Early Decision Application.

Early Decision

An application to a first choice college early in the fall of the senior year. The applicant is bound by contract to enter that institution if offered admission. The student may submit additional applications if he/she is deferred or rejected.

Fee Waiver

The ability, under certain financial conditions, for students to file applications without the required fee.

Fees

Any costs beyond tuition or room and board, such as student activity fees, lab fees, computer fees.

GPA

Grade point average, the high school grade point average based on grades 9th, 10th, 11th and mid year of 12th.

Matriculate

To register or enroll in a college or university as a candidate for a degree.

Non-Matriculate

A student studying at an institution on a part time basis.

Open Admission

A policy which allows students to be accepted regardless of traditional criteria

Profile

Many private colleges and universities require the Profile Form. It is used to determine the amount of financial aid offered to a student.

Rank in Class

The numerical position of a student in his/her graduating class. This rank is computed using a weighted average.

Rolling Admissions

A policy whereby review of applications for admission is done on a first-come, first-serve basis. Notification of acceptance or rejection is usually weeks after the college receive all credentials.

ROTC

Reserve Officers Training Corps. A scholarship or training program offered by the armed forces on many colleges' campuses. There is no obligation of service to the armed forces that must be fulfilled after graduation.

Score Choice

Score Choice allows you to put a hold on scores for all subject tests (SAT II) you take on a specific test date. This gives you a chance to review your performance on those tests before decide whether to make any or all of them an active part of your score record. Once activated, however, those particular scores may not be withheld again. For more information, see the Registration Bulletin for the SAT program. Students should make sure that the scores are released by the summer of junior year.

Summer Admission

Students who do not initially meet a college's admission criteria may be offered the opportunity to attend a summer session following high school graduation in order to prove their ability to succeed. Generally, students must maintain a specified grade point average to be invited back in the fall as a matriculated (degree seeking) student.

Financial Aid

College costs continue to escalate and more and more families are looking toward financial aid as a means to defray college expenses. Each year millions or even billions of dollars in financial aid are available. The only way to determine if you are eligible is if you apply. Families apply for financial aid using the FAFSA (Free application for student aid). The form will be available after January 1st of your son or daughter's senior year. Some schools will also ask for the CSS Profile as well as the FAFSA to determine aid. In the fall, the guidance department will host a financial aid night to help with the process.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): www.FAFSA.ed.gov
CSS PROFILE: www.profileonline.collegeboard.com

College costs are usually met through a combination of family contribution and need-based aid which is comprised of a grant and "self-help" component (a combination of a low-interest loan and a job during school year). Who determines family contribution? Financial aid experts have come up with a "uniform methodology" to analyze family resources. Given specific information on income, assets, debts, etc., the agencies involved determine the amount parents can be expected to pay. This figure will vary slightly from school to school based on the cost of college, additional information received and other factors. Outside scholarship or various forms of loan and funding will make up the remainder of a fully funded "financial aid package."

Cost of College-Family Contribution= Demonstrated Need

In contrast to financial aid, scholarships are not based on need but are awards in recognition of outstanding talent. These scholarships are competitive and sometimes difficult to obtain. Areas such as leadership, academics, music, art, and athletics are frequently among those singled out for scholarship awards.

Financial Aid Terms

AWARD LETTER	The letter sent from the colleges or universities indicating how much financial aid the student qualifies for.
COLLEGE WORK STUDY	Government-support financial aid program coordinated through financial aid offices. An eligible student (based on need) may work part-time on campus while attending college to earn money towards tuition.
CSS PROFILE	A form used by the College Scholarship Service to gain information about the student's total family income, assets, and expenses.
FEDERAL PARENT LOAN (PLUS)	A loan for parents who have dependent students in school. Parents can borrow a sum of money equal to the cost of education less financial aid received. Parents begin making payments 30-60 days after they receive the loan. Parents must pay at least \$50 a month. Loan must be repayed within ten years.
FEDERAL PELL GRANT	Financial assistance awarded by the federal government on the basis of need, designed to provide the foundation of an aid package for post secondary education. The Pell Grant may be used toward tuition, room and board, books or other educational costs, and requires no repayment.
FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN	A low interest loan that students may borrow to assist in meeting the cost of a college education.

<p>FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)</p>	<p>A form used by colleges to gain information about a student's total family income, assets and expenses used for federal based programs.</p>
<p>GRANTS</p>	<p>These are gifts, which do not have to be repaid. Many of these are awarded on the basis of need alone.</p>
<p>LOANS</p>	<p>Money loaned for higher education through either state or federal funds, private banks or the college itself. These require repayment with interest to the source of lending.</p>
<p>SCHOLARSHIPS</p>	<p>These are gifts, which do not have to be repaid. These are awarded when the recipient meets criteria other than need such as athletic, academic and artistic.</p>
<p>SUBSIDIZED STRATFORD LOAN</p>	<p>A Federally subsidized low interest loan made by a bank, credit union, or savings and loan association. Interest does not accrue while student is in college or in deferment. Repayment starts six month after graduation or leaving college. FAFSA must be completed to qualify for loan.</p>
<p>UNSUBSIDIZED STRATFORD LOAN</p>	<p>Same as the Subsidized Stratford Loan though interest will accrue while student is in college.</p>

College Internet Information Directory

Frequently Used

Elmsford School District:

The Guidance Department page seen on the Elmsford School district website is filled with information on dates that applications must be submitted and other forms needed to apply to college. Students can also connect to Naviance through the AHHS website.

Address: www.elmsd.org

College Board:

Students can use The College Board site to register for SAT tests and to send scores officially to colleges. There are also college search programs on the site as well.

Address: www.collegeboard.org

ACT:

Students use site to register and prepare for the ACT. Official ACT scores must be sent through website as well.

Address: www.actstudent.org

Naviance:

The Naviance program at Alexander Hamilton is used for your child to research careers and colleges, conduct personality and career tests, create resumes and organize their post high school planning. Students have received their login information from their counselor.

Address: www.connection.naviance.com/alexanderhhs

The Common Application:

Students can apply to several colleges using one application. Complete lists of participating colleges are on this site.

Address: www.commonapp.org

SUNY:

The State University of New York provides links to an online version of the SUNY application, a curriculum finder, and individual SUNY campus web pages.

Address: www.suny.edu

CUNY:

The City Universities of New York provide links to their colleges, specialized programs and application.

Address: www.cuny.edu

College Exploration

Campus Tours:

Offers an online multimedia college tour. These presentations include interactive maps, college Webcams, QuickTime virtual reality tours, campus movies and pictures.

Address: www.campustours.com

Careers and Colleges:

Site provides students with the opportunity to search colleges, loans, and scholarships all on one site. Test prep is also available.

Address: www.careersandcolleges.com

Go College:

Allows students to search for colleges and scholarships as well as tips on how to apply to college. Site offers monthly features for students going through the college process.

Address: www.gocollege.com

CollegeNet:

Contributes college and scholarship search services, a college bookstore, and a search engine devoted exclusively to educationally related websites.

Address: www.collegenet.com

Financial Aid and Scholarships**FAFSA:**

This is the Federal Financial Aid Homepage of the US Department of Education. The FAFSA form must be filled out after Jan.1st of the student's senior year in order to receive any type of federal aid including scholarships.

Address: www.fafsa.ed.gov

FinAid:

One of the most complete sources of financial aid information available on the Internet. Provides resources for completing the FAFSA and CSS profile including a calculator for families to estimate their expected family contribution. Ask the Advisor lets individual's e-mail specific questions about financial aid to over 300 financial aid administrators who have volunteered their response time.

Address: www.finaid.org

FastWeb:

One of the largest databases of scholarship information available on the Internet. Students can set up a profile which will customize a list of scholarships for that student. Whenever a new scholarship match is found, it is updated in the student's personal mailbox.

Address: www.fastweb.com

College is Possible:

Provides an overview of different forms of financial aid (ex. federal grants and loans, federal work study) as well as state sponsored and institutional aid.

Address: www.collegeispossible.org

New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association:

Provides information on financial aid, how to apply, planning calendar, and minority and athletic scholarship searches.

Address: www.nysfaa.org

Hispanic College Fund:

A national non-profit corporation that provides scholarships for deserving Hispanic students who intend to pursue a business major.

Address: www.hispanicfund.org

College Guidebooks

Resources with Objective Data and Information:

Cass & Birnbaum's Guide to American Colleges. Harper Collins
The College Handbook. College Board
Lovejoy's College Guide. Macmillan
Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges. Peterson's
America's Black & Tribal Colleges. J. Wilson Bowman
Four-Year College Admissions Index of Major & Sports. Orchard House

Resources with Subjective Evaluations and Descriptions:

The Insider's Guide to the Colleges. St. Martin's Griffin
The Multicultural Student's Guide to Colleges. Robert Mitchell

Resources with College Rankings and Ratings:

Barrons' Top 50: An Inside Look at America's Best Colleges. Fischgrund
The Fiske Guide to Colleges. Edward B. Fiske
The Gourman Report. Jack Gourman
The 100 Best Colleges for African-American Students. Wilson
Peterson's Competitive Colleges. Peterson's
Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges. Frederick Rug