

**MANATEE HIGH SCHOOL**

**Class of 2024  
College Handbook**



**College and Career Center**



# Manatee High School 941-714-7300

Principal: Sharon Scarbrough

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# PLANNING FOR COLLEGE/CAREER

## **MHS Resources for College and Career Planning**

While students must decide what post-secondary education is right for them and their goals, there are resources to help students through the experience. We are here to help and guide students.

### **College and Career Center**

Individual meetings are by appointment by completing a request for meeting form. Forms are available on the reception desk in Guidance. Students may stop in before or after school if they have quick questions or to pick up resource flyers. Services include:

- \* resources for college exploration
- \* college application assistance
- \* resume samples and tips
- \* college essay tips
- \* SAT and ACT test information
- \* scholarship opportunities
- \* career exploration resources

### **School Counselors**

Students may request an appointment with their counselor by completing a request for meeting form. Forms are available on the reception desk in Guidance.

### **Class of 2024 Schoology Course**

A course has been set up in Schoology for the Class of 2024. Go to Schoology>Courses>Class of 2024. Click “Materials” (on the left) for flyers/handouts. Click “Updates” (on the left) to see new posts and scroll down for past posts.

### **Manatee High School Website**

- The College and Career Center page on the MHS website provides information to students and parents related to college and career planning, including checklists and scholarships/financial aid. The site <https://www.manateeschools.net/manatee>. Click on the “Academics” tab, then on “College and Career Center”.
- The Guidance page on our website has your counselor’s contact information, information about community service procedures and Dual Enrollment details. Click on the “Academics” tab, then on “Guidance”.
- The Registrar’s page on the website is where you order transcripts for colleges and scholarships. Click on the “Academics” tab, then on “Registrar”.

### **Opportunity Board**

Located in the hallway between the cafeteria and Media Center, the Opportunity Board is where we post scholarship opportunities, SAT/ACT test date reminders and college information.

### **MHS E- Newsletter**

All families are encouraged to sign up to receive the MHS E-Newsletter for school news, important dates and reminders about programs at MHS. Go to the MHS website and [sign up](#) for the email newsletter.

# Senior College Planning Timeline 2023-2024

## **Important Dates for College Applications**

### **September 2023**

- \* Register for the SAT/ACT if you need to take/re-take the tests
- \* Be proactive – spend time researching colleges online, attending their virtual events, etc.
- \* Finalize the list of schools you will be applying to and gather application materials for each
- \* If applying to 4-year colleges/universities, start applications now
- \* **KNOW college application deadlines – they come early for some schools**
- \* Come prepared with questions to the MHS College Fair September 11th
- \* Attend other college fairs – in person if offered, or virtual
- \* Request teacher/counselor recommendations if needed

### **October**

- \* Start/complete/submit your college applications – including transcripts and SAT/ACT test scores
- \* You may complete the Florida Financial Aid Application (for Florida Bright Futures and other state grants) beginning **Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>** – <https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/SAPHome/SAPHome?url=home>
- \* If you are interested in MTC, attend their Open House on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 6pm-8pm, main campus
- \* Attend the MHS Financial Aid Information Night – October 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in the Davis Theater
- \* Check the Scholarship List on the MHS website. It is updated weekly, so check it often.
- \* If planning to attend **SCF**, complete your admission application

### **November**

- \* Confirm that each college to which you have applied has received all materials, including transcripts and test scores
- \* Keep working on scholarships

### **December**

- \* Complete the Federal financial aid application (FAFSA) available sometime **December 2023**(exact date TBD) <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> Check FAFSA deadlines for each college
- \* Study hard for exams

### **January 2024**

- \* Complete the FAFSA as soon as possible. Check the MHS website for date/time of our FAFSA workshop
- \* If planning to attend **SCF**, complete your admission application and apply for SCF Foundation scholarships
- \* Keep working on scholarships

### **February**

- \* If desired, schedule campus visits to colleges where you've been accepted to help you make your final decision
- \* If planning to attend **MTC**, complete your admission application

### **March**

- \* Follow up with colleges to which you have been admitted about housing, meal plan, orientation, etc.

### **April**

- \* Make sure you have submitted all necessary paperwork to the school you will attend

### **May**

- \* Complete the MHS Senior Survey as required by the district
- \* AP exams
- \* Request that your final transcripts be sent to the college you will attend

## **College Options**

### **Post-Secondary Options: Decide Which Kind of Degree Is Right For You**

Saying you want to earn a college degree could mean a number of things. Part of your college selection process should be thinking about what kind of degree you want to earn, and which college can get you there. Or consider the career you desire and what type of degree is needed. Here are some of your options:

#### **\*Associate Degree**

You receive an Associate of Arts (A.A.) or Associate of Science (A.S.) degree after completing two years of study that are similar to the first two years of a four-year college program. Community (State) colleges (like SCF) and some four-year universities offer associate degrees. After earning an A.A. or an A.S., some students transfer to a four-year college to complete the requirements for a bachelor's degree (in Florida we call it the “2+2” Program). Others enter the workforce right away. Many careers require only an A.S. degree.

#### **\*Bachelor's or Baccalaureate Degree**

You receive a bachelor's degree after completing a four- or five-year, full-time program of study at a college. The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.) are the most common. Other colleges award very specific degrees, such as the Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) or Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch.).

#### **\*Vocational-Technical (Vo-Tech) and Career Colleges**

A vo-tech or career college (like MTC) offers specialized training to students who are interested in a particular industry or career. At these colleges, students are not required to take general education classes in all subjects. You take classes only in your field of study — for example, culinary arts, firefighting, dental hygiene or medical-records technology. The classes are hands-on career training for high demand jobs. When you complete your program, you receive a certificate of completion.

(Source: Adapted from College Board 2011)

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## **Career Exploration/College Majors**

Having a career goal may help you determine what type of college is best for you. There are many resources that can help you assess majors, career goals, interests and skills. Here are just a few resources that can help:

### **Major and Career Profiles – College Board - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>**

The **Big Future** section of the College Board website is full of information on colleges and careers. Click on “Explore Careers” to see information on searching careers, career clusters and majors. Students can read more about specific majors, helpful high school courses, college courses and related majors.

### **Florida Shines - [www.floridashines.org](http://www.floridashines.org)**

Florida Shines works with the state's 40 colleges and universities and other partners to help you succeed in school and beyond. This website provides a wealth of information for students about colleges in Florida as well as careers.

## **College Options**

### **Opportunities to learn about different colleges:**

- **MHS College Fair**

Monday, September 11th – during the day. Juniors and Seniors will be released at specific times to attend the event. Come prepared with questions, talk to the representatives, gather information.

- **School District Post-Secondary Education Night**

Monday, September 11th – 6pm-8pm at Manatee Technical College (6305 State Road 70 East). Open to all students and families. In addition to representatives from colleges, there will be Q & A sessions on applications, financial aid and Florida Bright Futures.

- **Campus Visits – in person or virtual**

Students are encouraged to visit colleges – either in person if available or virtually. If you can't attend in person, look for virtual admission sessions/virtual campus tours - many also have live chat sessions where you can connect with an admissions representative.

Go to the college website for details, times and to sign up. *It is an important part of the college decision process.* Visiting campuses – even virtually - will give you a better understanding of which college is right for you.

- **NACAC Virtual College Fairs**

The National Association for College Admission Counseling is offering both in person and virtual College Fairs this fall. This is a chance to hear firsthand from those-in-the-know at hundreds of colleges and universities nearby, across the country, and around the world.

The in-person event nearest to us is Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> in Jacksonville, FL. Details/registration - <https://www.nacacattend.org/23Jacksonville>

Virtual options are September 10<sup>th</sup>, October 15<sup>th</sup> and November 12<sup>th</sup>. Details/registration - <https://www.nacacattend.org/fairs>

- **College 101 – free online webinars from Florida Shines**

Florida Shines is offering three free webinars to help students (and parents) find the right college, how to apply and ways to make it affordable. Step 1: Explore on September 14<sup>th</sup>; Step 2: Apply on September 21<sup>st</sup> and Step 3: Fund on September 28<sup>th</sup>. You can register for one, or all, of the webinars. Be sure to save your spot today by registering at [www.FloridaShines.org/College-101](http://www.FloridaShines.org/College-101).

## **College Options**

### **STATE COLLEGE OF FLORIDA (SCF)**

Whether you're seeking to earn a career-ready degree or make a smooth transition to a university, State College of Florida has the full college experience at exceptional savings.

A.A. students complete general education courses and prerequisite classes to prepare for a seamless transition to a four-year program.

SCF also offers more than 30 workforce certificates and A.S. workforce degrees including Graphic Design Technology, Business Administration and Management, Dental Hygiene, Radiography, Health Services Management, Network Systems Technology Paralegal/Legal Assisting and many more.

Learn more about SCF by visiting campus or their website – [www.scf.edu](http://www.scf.edu).

***Check Schoology for dates/times that our SCF rep will be at MHS for an application workshop!***

#### **Why consider a State College (like SCF)?**

- Can be an alternative pathway to a 4-year degree (the 2+2 program)
- Save money – and you can still get financial aid
- Convenience – close to home, can attend full or part time commitments

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### **MANATEE TECHNICAL COLLEGE (MTC)**

For over 50 years, Manatee Technical College has proudly served students by offering outstanding educational experiences leading to great careers, while providing a skilled workforce for business and industry in Manatee County and the surrounding areas.

To meet the demand for training, MTC has expanded its offerings to include over 50 career prep programs – the largest selection of programs offered in the state of Florida. Career options include programs in the areas of Health Science, Business Technology, Construction Services, Transportation, Digital Technology, Public Service, Culinary Arts, Manufacturing, and Information Technology.

Many programs can be completed in a year or less and each focus on training students for better job and providing business and industry with a skilled, professional workforce.

Learn more by visiting their website: [www.manateetech.edu](http://www.manateetech.edu)

***Attend the MTC Main Campus Open House on October 5<sup>th</sup> – 6pm-8pm***

#### **Why consider a Technical College (like MTC)?**

- Job-Ready Training
- Financial Aid if You Qualify
- Get a Career-in-a-Year
- Employers Waiting to Hire You



## **Assessing Your List of Colleges**

As you develop a list of colleges that interest you, be sure you can answer these questions about them:

### **The Basics**

- Where is the college? Can you locate it on a map? Is it too close to home? Is it too far? Is it too cold or too hot?
- Have you taken the course work the college requires for admission?
- What size is the college? How many students are undergraduates?
- Does the college offer majors that interest you?
- Is the college coed or single sex?
- What percentage of students live off campus?
- How many of the students graduate in four years? Five years? Six years?
- How many first-year students return for their sophomore year?
- How much does the program cost? What is the total per-year expense?
- What type of financial aid is available?

### **Where do you fit in?**

- What are the college scores for the SAT or ACT? Where does that place you?
- What were the high school GPAs of most of the freshmen last year?
- Are the freshmen guaranteed on-campus housing? If not, where do they live?
- Are there extracurricular activities that interest you?

### **Visit the colleges' Web sites, read the guidebooks and look at their literature**

- What are their strong academic programs? (Ask a college representative, students, graduates, and teachers.)
- What courses are required for graduation?
- Are the courses you need/want available each semester? At convenient times?
- Are there special programs that interest you (study abroad, internships, etc.)?
- What is the social life like? What percentage of students join fraternities or sororities?
- Do the pictures and the language the college uses to describe itself attract you?
- What is your general impression of the college?
- Is the school accredited?

### **Admissions Process**

- When are applications due?
- Does the college accept the Common Application? If so, does it require supplemental forms?
- What does the application contain? Are essays required?
- Is an interview suggested or required? Is an interview available from staff or alumni?
- When may you visit the college? What is the policy regarding campus visits?
- What are the financial aid deadlines? What financial aid forms are required?

### **Now answer these questions**

- Am I a strong candidate for admission to this college?
- If I am not a strong candidate, what are my chances?
- Do I want to visit this college?
- What additional information do I need?

Source: College Counseling Sourcebook, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. 2007 The College Board. All rights reserved.  
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## **SAT and ACT Testing**

Students must register online to take the SAT and/or ACT. **There are registration deadlines, so plan ahead.** Your SAT and/or ACT account is also where you will check for your scores. Scores typically are available three weeks after the test. If colleges require official score reports, you can order from your account or you can list colleges to automatically receive your scores as part of the registration process.

Be sure to PREPARE for these college entrance exams! Don't just walk in on that Saturday morning and hope for the best. Students should study for these tests, just like the preparation for any test. Make time each week to take practice tests, review study guides, quiz yourself on vocabulary, review math concepts, etc.

### **BE AWARE OF REGISTRATION DEADLINES! AVOID PAYING A LATE FEE!**

#### **Fee Waivers**

Fee Waivers for the SAT and ACT tests are available from the school counselors for qualified students.

Students who use a test fee waiver for the **SAT** (or who used one last year) automatically get the second test for free. Students do not need to see their guidance counselor for a second fee waiver. Log in to your SAT account to see instructions for this new process. See your counselor for an ACT fee waiver.

College Application fee waivers –Many colleges will waive their application fee for students who took an SAT or ACT with a fee waiver. Students who use an SAT test fee waiver will automatically receive four **college application** fee waivers by logging in to their College Board account. Students who used an ACT fee waiver may see their school counselor for a **college application** fee waiver that they will send to the colleges they apply to.

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#### **FREE ONLINE, PERSONALIZED TEST PREP**

The College Board has partnered with **Khan Academy** to provide free, online, personalized prep to help students improve their SAT scores.

Go to <https://www.khanacademy.org/sat> to learn more and to create your account.

- Personalized to you
- Official
- Instant

ACT provides free, online, personalized practice with a **MyACT Account**.

Go to <https://my.act.org/account> to learn more and create your account.

- Free online test prep
- Free study guide
- Free online test prep events

**SAT TEST DATES FOR 2023-2024**  
\$60.00

REGISTER ONLINE AT [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Late Registration Deadline</u>
Aug. 26	July 28	Aug. 15
Oct. 7	Sept. 7	Sept. 26
Nov. 4	Oct. 5	Oct. 24
Dec. 2	Nov. 2	Nov. 21
March 9*	Feb. 23	TBD
May 4*	April 19	TBD
June 1*	May 17	TBD

**Go to the College Board website for updates, changes and to register**

*\*Beginning with the March test, the SAT will be a digital administration*

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**ACT TEST DATES FOR 2023-2024**

\$68.00 – no writing/\$93.00 - with writing section

*(Writing section required for some colleges- check each college for their requirements)*

REGISTER ONLINE AT [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Late Registration Deadline</u>
Sept. 9	Aug. 4	Aug. 18
Oct. 28	Sept. 22	Oct. 6
Dec. 9	Nov. 3	Nov. 17
Feb. 10	Jan. 5	Jan. 19
Apr. 13	March 8	March 22
June 8	May 3	May 17
July 13	June 7	June 21

**Go to the ACT website for updates, changes and to register**

**NOTE: In the event that test centers are forced to close for COVID health/safety, refer to above websites for details on their test cancellation policies/details.**

# APPLY TO COLLEGE

A complete application generally consists of several documents – the application and application fee, transcripts, and test scores. All must be received by the colleges before they can make an admission decision.

**READ DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY** – every school does things just a little differently!

## **1. The Application/Application Fee**

Most colleges and universities require applications to be submitted online. To begin an application, go to the college website admission page to learn what is required, read the instructions and to access the application.

The applications may all be formatted differently, but generally ask for similar information, including personal information, what classes you are taking your senior year, all school, community and volunteer activities, self-reported SAT/ACT test scores and, sometimes, an essay. ***Read the directions carefully!*** Review your application before you submit it. Check for spelling and grammar errors.

Students must also pay an application fee (usually around \$40 per application). The application is not complete until this fee has been paid. Once an application has been submitted, the college will provide information on how to check your application status. **It is important that you check your status to be sure all materials have been received.**

**Using the Common Application-** the Common App allows students to apply to their member colleges. It is critical that students who are using the Common App read the application instructions on each college website in addition to completing the Common App. There may be additional information needed besides just the Common App – like self-reported grades, supplemental essays, etc. The Common App has a guide for first year students that can answer many of your questions - <https://www.commonapp.org/apply/first-year-students>

## **2. Transcripts**

Colleges need your high school academic record, referred to as your transcript. Some colleges ask you to send your official high school transcript and others ask you to “self-report” the information on a specific form.

### **To send your official transcript:**

- **Transcripts are ordered online.** Go to the MHS website, click on the “Academics” tab, and click “Registrar”; link is on the right side of the page
- Follow the instructions to pay the fee and input the name/address of the college(s). If ordering multiple transcripts, place all on one order to avoid multiple processing charges
- See the Registrar’s office if you have any questions (2<sup>nd</sup> floor by Guidance)

### **To “self-report”:**

- The college/university will provide details on how to complete the form (sometimes referred to as the SSAR), including the deadline, as part of their application instructions. It is helpful to refer to your FOCUS account or get a copy of your transcript so that you enter the information accurately. If you have questions, contact the college/university.

## **3. Test Scores**

If required, students must have official score reports from SAT and/or ACT sent to each college to which they are applying. Some colleges allow students to self-report their SAT/ACT scores. Again, read the instructions on the college/university website. To send your scores, log on to your SAT or ACT account and follow the links to send scores. If you have registered to take these tests this fall, you can have your scores sent directly to the colleges by including that information on the test registration form.

## **College Application FAQs**

### **Q. How do I apply to colleges/universities?**

A. Most colleges and universities require that students apply online. Applications can be found on the college websites under “Admissions”. Students should visit the websites of the colleges to learn the admission process and requirements. Some colleges are part of the **Common Application** – a group of more than 1,000 colleges who share a common application with supplements for each school. Colleges may also have their own “Institutional” application. Use whichever application the college recommends.

### **Q. When should I apply?**

A. Application deadlines vary from college to college. It is important that students know the deadlines and understand what must be received by that deadline. Students applying to 4-year colleges/universities are encouraged to apply early in their senior year – September/October. Students applying to SCF can complete the application starting in October. Students applying to MTC can complete the application in February.

Some colleges have one deadline, while others use “rolling admissions”, meaning they will review applications and make admission decisions once all materials are received from the student. Many have “priority deadlines” for financial aid/scholarship consideration. Students should always contact the college/university that they are interested in attending to verify the application deadlines and procedures.

### **Q. How many colleges should I apply to?**

A. That’s up to you, but if you are applying to 4-year colleges/universities, a good rule of thumb is to apply to 4-6 colleges. You want to have options, so apply to a range of schools – public, private, in-state, out-of-state, “reach”, etc.

### **Q. Besides the application, what else is needed?**

A. The complete application consists of several documents – the application itself, the application fee, transcripts and test scores. All must be received by the colleges before they can make an admission decision. Students must have their high school transcript (or complete the self-reported transcript form) sent to each college to which they are applying. Students must also have official score reports from SAT and/or ACT sent to each college to which they are applying – if required. To send scores, students must log on to their SAT or ACT account and follow the links to send scores. Students may have scores sent directly to the colleges by including that information when they register for the tests.

### **Q. Should I apply if I plan to take the SAT/ACT again?**

A. Yes but know that if scores are required the application is not complete without test scores. Students may apply, but without test scores, colleges cannot make a decision. Most college applications will ask for scores taken to date and allow students to indicate if/when they will test again. The college/university may delay a decision until it receives additional scores from the tests students have indicated they will be taking.

### **Q. What if I take the tests more than once?**

A. Most colleges/universities will use the best of your scores. Many will “mix and match” the best of your sub scores. For example, if a student takes the SAT twice, the college *may* use the best Critical Reading and Math scores and recombine them for a new total score. However, it is important that you understand the policies of the colleges to which you are applying since some colleges/universities *may not* combine scores.

***READ THE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY!  
CALL THE COLLEGE IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS!***

## **Letters of Recommendation**

Some colleges, and many scholarship applications, ask for letters of recommendation. They may specify that the letters be from a teacher or school counselor. To help teachers and counselors write your letter of recommendation, the MHS College and Career Center has developed a form. It is optional, but highly recommended. Forms are available in the College and Career Center.

The purpose of the form is to provide your recommender with information that will help him/her to write a thoughtful letter of recommendation. You benefit by filling out the form thoroughly. You may also attach your resume.

The form should be filled out fully and completely and provided to each teacher or counselor when making a request. **Please give teachers and/or counselors at least two weeks to complete recommendations.**

## **Resume**

Many college applications have a section where students can list their extracurricular activities, community service, honors, awards and work experience. This allows the college to learn more about the student. Generally, colleges are looking at the “quality” of your involvement versus the “quantity” of activities. It is recommended that students create their resume ahead of time and then use it when completing college admission (and scholarship) applications.

The resume should include:

### Educational Achievements

\* Include items like College Preparatory Academy, Medical Academy, Honors/AP classes

### Honors and Awards

\* Include any awards received. For example-- White M, awards for science fair, placing in competitions for organizations like HOSA or TSA, being selected to receive an award or honor, etc. Give a brief explanation.

### Extracurricular Activities

\* Include school-related activities including any leadership positions, sports, any programs that you attended or were selected to attend. Be sure to give a brief summary of what you did.

### Community Service

\* Include clubs or organizations where community/volunteer service is performed, including leadership positions. This can include high school clubs (Key Club, etc.) that perform community service. Be sure to give a brief summary of what you did.

### Work Experience

\* Include any jobs held during high school. This can include babysitting or other similar activities.

It can be in bullet point format and it is important to quantify the activity – how many years you’ve been involved and how many hours per week or per month you spend on the activity. Be sure to briefly describe your participation so they get a clear picture of your involvement.

***Sampled resume templates are available in the College and Career Center.***

## **College Essay Tips**

The college essay is your chance to use your voice to add to your college application. It's a great opportunity to personalize your application beyond the grades, scores, and other information you've provided and can make a difference at decision time.

### **Tips for Essay Writing**

A typical college application essay, also known as a personal statement, is 400-600 words. Although that may seem short, writing about yourself can be challenging. It's not something you want to rush or put off at the last moment. Think of it as a critical piece of the application process. Follow these tips to write an impactful essay that can work in your favor.

#### **1. Start Early.**

Few people write well under pressure. Try to complete your first draft a few weeks before you have to turn it in. Many advisers recommend starting as early as the summer before your senior year in high school. That way, you have ample time to think about the prompt and craft the best personal statement possible.

#### **2. Understand the Prompt and Instructions.**

Before you begin the writing process, take time to understand what the college wants from you. The worst thing you can do is skim through the instructions and submit a piece that doesn't even fit the bare minimum requirements or address the essay topic. Look at the prompt, consider the required word count, and note any unique details each school wants.

#### **3. Create a Strong Opener.**

Students seeking help for their application essays often have trouble getting things started. It's a challenging writing process. Finding the right words to start can be the hardest part. Spending more time working on your opener is always a good idea. The opening sentence sets the stage for the rest of your piece. The introductory paragraph is what piques the interest of the reader, and it can immediately set your essay apart from the others.

#### **4. Stay on Topic.**

One of the most important things to remember is to keep to the essay topic. If you're applying to 10 or more colleges, it's easy to veer off course with so many application essays. A common mistake many students make is trying to fit previously written essays into the mold of another college's requirements. This seems like a time-saving way to avoid writing new pieces entirely, but it often backfires. The result is usually a final piece that's generic, unfocused, or confusing. Always write a new essay for every application, no matter how long it takes.

#### **5. Think About Your Response.**

Don't try to guess what the admissions officials want to read. Your essay will be easier to write—and more exciting to read—if you're genuinely enthusiastic about your subject. Here's an example: If all your friends are writing application essays about covid-19, it may be a good idea to avoid that topic, unless during the pandemic you had a vivid, life-changing experience you're burning to share. Whatever topic you choose, avoid canned responses. Be creative.

#### **6. Focus on You.**

Essay prompts typically give you plenty of latitude, but panel members expect you to focus on a subject that is personal (although not overly intimate) and particular to you. Admissions counselors say the best essays help them learn something about the candidate that they would never know from reading the rest of the application.

#### **7. Stay True to Your Voice.**

Use your usual vocabulary. Avoid fancy language you wouldn't use in real life. Imagine yourself reading this essay aloud to a classroom full of people who have never met you. Keep a confident tone. Be wary of words and phrases that undercut that tone.

#### **8. Be Specific and Factual.**

Capitalize on real-life experiences. Your essay may give you the time and space to explain why a particular achievement meant so much to you. But resist the urge to exaggerate and embellish. Admissions counselors read thousands of essays each year. They can easily spot a fake.

#### **9. Edit and Proofread.**

When you finish the final draft, run it through the spell checker on your computer. Then don't read your essay for a few days. You'll be more apt to spot typos and awkward grammar when you reread it. After that, ask a teacher, parent, or college student (preferably an English or communications major) to give it a quick read. While you're at it, double-check your word count.

*(Source: College Board Big Future "Tips for Writing an Effective College Essay")*

# Common College Terminology

As students begin to research and apply to colleges, they will encounter terminology or lingo that they may not be familiar with. Here are some common terms you may encounter and what they mean.

## **Common Application**

Similar to the Coalition Application, the Common Application is a standard application platform accepted by almost 1,000 colleges. Students can fill out this application once and submit it to any of the colleges that accept it. It is **IMPORTANT** that students read the application instructions on the college websites before completing the Common Application. Many colleges use only specific sections of the Common App and/or have supplements that must be completed.

## **CSS Profile**

A financial aid form produced by the College Board that is required by some colleges, including many highly selective colleges/universities. Check each college website to determine if they require the CSS Profile – many do not.

## **Early Action (EA)**

An application option to submit the applications before the regular deadlines and get admission decisions from colleges earlier than usual. Early action plans are not binding, which means that you are not committed to enroll in that college if you are accepted early action. Read the information carefully on the college website before choosing to apply EA.

## **Early Decision (ED)**

An application option to submit an application to your first-choice college before the regular deadline. Early Decision plans are binding. Students agree to enroll in the college if admitted and offered a financial aid package that meets their needs. Students should carefully discuss this with parents/guardians and their counselor before making the decision to apply ED.

## **Modified Rolling Admissions**

A practice of some colleges to review admission applications several times throughout the year. The college will post several deadlines and the dates when those applications will be reviewed.

## **Priority Date or Deadline**

The date by which the application must be received. Deadlines are critical for college applications and students must know deadlines and give themselves ample time to complete the forms. Supplements to the application – like the application fee, transcripts, etc. - may also be required by the deadline. Again, students must read the admission instructions carefully on each college website.

## **Rolling Admission**

An admissions procedure used by some colleges/universities where they consider each admission application as soon as all materials are received. The college then notifies students with their admission decision. Colleges that use rolling admission often begin offering admission to students as early as October of senior year, so students are encouraged to complete applications fall of senior year to be given the strongest consideration.

## **SSAR – Self-reported Student Academic Record**

An online form used by many public universities in Florida instead of a transcript. Students self-report all courses and semester grades that have been attempted (or will be attempted) for high school. It includes high school classes taken in middle school and dual enrollment classes. Colleges that require the SSAR have detailed instructions on their website. (Some out-of-state universities require a similar form called the SRAR – Self Reported Academic Record).



# PAYING FOR COLLEGE

## Cost of Attendance

When planning for college, it's important that students and their families understand the cost of attendance. Besides tuition, students need to understand the other expenses, which may include fees, dorm, meals and other expenses. In-state tuition is much less than out-of-state tuition, so if you want to attend an out-of-state college, plan for the difference. Private colleges and universities typically have higher tuition costs as well.

Generally, there are five main expenses.

## Five Main Groups of Expenses

### 1. Tuition and Fees

Tuition is the price you pay to take classes at the college. This amount can vary based on the number of credit hours you take and whether you're an in-state or out-of-state student. Some colleges also have extra fees for specific services, like lab fees or parking.

### 2. Room and Board

These costs include your residence hall if you live on campus and a college meal plan to eat in the dining halls. Students who live off campus or at home need to factor those expenses in their college costs.

### 3. Books and supplies

Textbooks and other supplies may be required for classes. These costs will vary by semester and by class.

### 4. Personal Expenses

These include anything else you might spend money on – eating out, laundry, cell phone, clothing, computer, etc. Figure out what you might spend and add that amount to your budget.

### 5. Transportation

Factor in gas if you commute or have a car in college. If you will be flying home for breaks or holidays, include those costs here. Again, these costs will vary depending on how much you travel.

Colleges will provide an estimated cost of attendance on their websites. Remember, these costs vary from student to student, but it's important for students and their families to understand an estimated cost of attendance. Then factor in financial aid you might receive to see the "net" price, or what you/your family will actually pay. **That's why applying for financial aid is so important!**

# Four Key Steps to Financial Aid

## 1 Federal Aid -- FAFSA

THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL AID. The FAFSA is the *key* to federal grants (like the Pell Grant), federally-backed student loans and work study. It is need-based aid. **The application will open December 2023/January 2024.** For the Class of 2024, you will need your/your parents 2022 federal tax information or tax returns. See the FAFSA website for details on how to apply and to access the application- <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>

We encourage *all* families to complete the FAFSA even if you think you won't qualify -- colleges and many scholarships use information from the FAFSA to award their scholarships/aid. You can complete it even if you don't know where you will attend college/technical school. It's important to complete the FAFSA in October of senior year – be aware of deadlines each college may have.

## 2 State Aid – Florida Student Financial Aid

Seniors must complete the Florida Student Financial Aid application to be eligible for state aid, including **Florida Bright Futures**. Bright Futures provides scholarship money for students who will attend college in Florida. It is merit-based aid - eligibility is based on GPA, SAT/ACT scores **and** community service/work hours. See your counselor for more information and check the state website for any legislative changes.

Seniors must apply between October 1 and graduation to be eligible. Go to [www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org/ssfad/bf/](http://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org/ssfad/bf/) to apply. It's important that you know and understand the eligibility requirements and deadline!

*All* students should apply-- even if they are not sure if they will qualify, if they are not considering going to college, are planning to go out of state, are taking a year off or are enlisting in the military. There are state grants in addition to Bright Futures for which you may be eligible.

## 3 Institutional Aid

Check for scholarships at the college you will attend. Many offer scholarships through their financial aid office. Students may need to submit separate applications. Scholarships may be need-based and/or merit-based. Most require that the student have successfully submitted the FAFSA.

## 4 Private Scholarships

There are many national and local organizations that offer scholarships. Some are specific to a major, an ethnicity or require certain GPA/test scores, so students need to read each carefully for the eligibility requirements.

The College and Career Center at Manatee High School maintains a list of scholarship opportunities that is posted on the school website (<https://www.manateeschools.net/manatee>) – click on “Academics” then “College and Career Center” to see the link. Additional scholarship resources are on page 21.

# **1 FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid**

The FAFSA is the most important means available to finance your education

**The big news this year is that the FAFSA has undergone an overhaul. As a result, the application will not open until sometime in December 2023.** There have been a number of changes that are still being implemented. So, stay tuned for more information!

**District-wide FAFSA Workshops will be available in January 2024 to assist students and their parents in completing the application.**

*From StudentAid.gov:*

Why should I fill out the FAFSA® form?

The FAFSA is the *key* to getting financial aid to help pay for college. Before each year of college, apply for federal grants, work-study, and loans with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form. Your college uses your FAFSA data to determine your federal aid eligibility. Many states and colleges use FAFSA data to award their own aid. After submission, you'll receive your Student Aid Report.

When do I fill out the FAFSA® form?

The 2024–25 FAFSA form will be available “sometime” in **December 2023**.

There are a few federal student aid programs that have limited funds, so *be sure to apply as soon as you can* once the FAFSA form is available for the year you'll be attending school. Additionally, each college may have its own deadline for FAFSA. Check the school's website or contact the college financial aid office.

Some programs other than government or school aid require that you file the FAFSA form. For instance, you can't get certain private scholarships unless you're eligible for a Federal Pell Grant—and you can't find out whether you're eligible for a Pell Grant unless you file a FAFSA form.

You have to fill out the FAFSA® form every year you're in school in order to stay eligible for federal student aid.

What is the FSA ID?

This is the first step in completing the FAFSA. The FSA ID is a username and password combination, which is needed to start a FAFSA application and to sign your FAFSA® form electronically. Students should create their FSA ID before beginning the application. It may take 1-3 days for the account to be verified and available to begin the FAFSA form. Parents/contributors must also have an FSA ID in order to provide their information on their child's FAFSA form. Create your FSA ID here :<https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch> Make sure you retain your log in information – you will use it each time you access a FAFSA.

*Financial aid is not just for four-year colleges and universities. Any accredited college/university/technical school that participates in the federal student aid programs will expect students to complete the FAFSA!*

**Check the College and Career Center page of the MHS website for additional FAFSA information, resources, links and more**

## 2 State of Florida Financial Aid

All Seniors should complete the **Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA)**. It opens October 1<sup>st</sup> of senior year. In addition to the Bright Futures Scholarship, there are a number of other state grants/scholarships included in this one application. **Read the specific requirements and full details on the Florida Student Scholarship & Grant Program website:**  
<https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/SAPHome/SAPHome?url=home>

### Florida Bright Futures

To be considered for Bright Futures, you must complete/submit the FFAA. There are several different Florida Bright Futures scholarships – Academic, Medallion, Gold Seal Vocational and Gold Seal CAPE. Please read the requirements for each carefully. *Note: The Gold Seal awards can only be used for vocational programs/degrees.*

Students must complete the Florida Financial Aid Application during their last year in high school beginning October 1 and meet requirements prior to graduation (however, scores of ACT®/CLT®/SAT®/PERT tests taken through August 31 are accepted for evaluation purposes). *It is your responsibility to know and meet the requirements.* Eligible students may only receive Bright Futures award funding at eligible Florida postsecondary institutions.

Florida high school students who wish to qualify for the Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) award or the Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) award must meet all initial eligibility requirements – please visit the above website for details.

Type	16 High School Course Credits <sup>1</sup>	High School Weighted Bright Futures GPA	College Entrance Exams by High School Graduation Year (ACT®/CLT®/SAT®)	Volunteer Service Only	Paid Work Hours Only	Combination of Volunteer/Paid Hours
FAS	4 - English <i>(three must include substantial writing)</i> 4 - Mathematics <i>(at or above the Algebra I level)</i> 3 - Natural Science <i>(two must have substantial laboratory)</i>	3.50	2023-24 Graduates: 29/96/1340  2024-25 Graduates: 29/96/1340	100 hours	100 hours	100 hours
FMS	3 - Social Science  2 - World Language <i>(sequential, in same language)</i>	3.00	2023-24 Graduates: 25/84/1210  2024-25 Graduates: 25/84/1210	75 hours	100 hours	100 hours

These eligibility requirements are subject to change with each legislative session.

Note GPA Requirement: unrounded, weighted high school GPA (calculated to two decimal places) in the 16 college-preparatory credits. Honors, AP and DE weighted .50 per year course. See Bright Futures website for details.

*\* For details of the Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV) and Gold Seal CAPE Scholars, go to the Bright Futures website. Those awards can only be used to fund a career education or certificate program.*

**IMPORTANT:** Students will be evaluated based on official test scores from the FDOE repository. **To ensure OSFA obtains official test scores, official single sitting test scores must be sent to at least one of Florida’s public state universities when registering for the ACT®/SAT®.**

### **3 Institutional Aid**

Research scholarships and other financial aid on the college websites. Some automatically consider students while others may require additional applications. The colleges may have priority deadlines in order to be considered for institutional aid.

### **4 Private Scholarships**

Research scholarship databases – there are many. Be sure to check the MHS Scholarship List posted on the College and Career Center page of the school website - <https://www.manateeschools.net/domain/3113>. As applications become available, they are added to the list and posted on the website. The list is updated frequently, so check it often. Some examples include the Selby Scholars, American Legion, AAUW, Rotary Club, MHS Alumni and more.

Other resources:

<https://www.hsf.net/> - Hispanic Scholarship Fund

<https://unconf.org/scholarships> - Scholarships for African American students

<http://www.mefinfo.org/> - Manatee Education Foundation Scholarship Source

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) – national scholarship database

<https://scf-foundation.org/>- scholarships for State College of Florida

[www.manateecf.org](http://www.manateecf.org) - local scholarships, including opportunities for SCF and MTC

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search> - Scholarship Search Big Future

[https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/scholarships?utm\\_campaign=meetedar&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=meetedar.com](https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/scholarships?utm_campaign=meetedar&utm_medium=social&utm_source=meetedar.com) – Federal Student Aid Scholarship Tips/Search

## HELPFUL WEBSITES

### **College and Career Planning Websites**

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) – SAT test info, college exploration and planning

[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) – ACT test info, college exploration and planning

<https://www.manateeschools.net/domain/3113> - MHS College and Career Center page of school website

[www.floridashines.org](http://www.floridashines.org) – college exploration and planning for the state of Florida

<https://studentaid.gov/resources/prepare-for-college/students/career->

[search?\\_ga=2.145242868.1976947824.1598624957-1516188439.1597837036](https://studentaid.gov/resources/prepare-for-college/students/career-search?_ga=2.145242868.1976947824.1598624957-1516188439.1597837036) – Career Exploration

<https://floridanext.com/> - Florida Next Magazine resources

<https://www.mymajors.com/> - Learn about college majors

<https://www.bls.gov/k12/students/> - career exploration (From the Bureau of Labor Statistics)

<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/how-to-write-a-college-essay> - Essay tips

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays> - Essay tips/samples

### **SAT/ACT Test Prep Websites**

<https://www.khanacademy.org/sat> - College Board and Khan Academy program

<https://my.act.org/account/signin?location=https://my.act.org> - MyACT prep program

[http://www.testprepreview.com/sat\\_practice.htm](http://www.testprepreview.com/sat_practice.htm)

<http://www.4tests.com/exams/examdetail.asp?eid=6>