

COLLEGE COUNSELING

FAQS

Q. When will the college office send the mid-year reports and first semester grades to the colleges?

- A.** Grades, comments and advisor's letters will be available in the college office during the week of the January 26, and mid-year reports will be mailed by the end of the week. A new transcript with the student's fall semester grades and any new testing will be sent along with an update from your child's college counselor. The College Office summarizes all of the positive teacher and advisor comments along with updates directly from the student, dorm parents, coaches and other adults involved in a student's life at Middlesex. It also gives us the opportunity to explain disappointing grades or other issues that have arisen during the semester.

Q. If a student receives an incomplete letter from a college, what steps should we take to complete the application?

- A.** Generally, it takes colleges two weeks from the application due date to sort through their mail and file all of the applications. Keep in mind that admissions offices are flooded with applications, in many cases 15,000 plus, as well as recommendations, transcripts and school reports. The first step is to call the admissions office to confirm the status of the application and identify the missing document. We have a phone line in our office available for the students to make these calls, so students should come to our office. Some colleges will ask the student to call back a few days later to check on the application if they are still sorting through their mail, while others will ask for the materials to be resent or faxed immediately.

If a student is missing official copies of the standardized testing, they will need to contact the College Board and rush report their test scores immediately. We can also fax a copy of their official test score report to the colleges; however, most admission offices want the scores reported directly from the College Board or ACT.

Q. When is the last time a student can take the SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject Tests for the colleges to consider them for their admissions process?

- A.** The last test date most colleges will accept is the January test date for SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject Tests. The next available SAT test is at the end of March, which is too late for the college process. Likewise, the February ACT is typically not accepted at this point in the process.

Q. If a student's first semester grades are not as strong as we had hoped, what should we do?

- A.** In many cases, it is a wise move to re-evaluate the student's "likely" or "mid" schools to make sure that the calibration of the risk assessment is still in line with the original creation of the list. Colleges look closely at senior grades when they make their final decisions, and, while the disappointing grades can be explained, it can make the final analysis more unpredictable. There are many excellent schools with February 1 and later deadlines that can be added to lists.

Q. How does the college office communicate with the colleges during the regular action process?

- A.** There is a normal pattern of communication between the college office and the admissions offices. After first semester grades are available, we send out the update mentioned above. We follow up each application with a phone call to the colleges to make sure they have all the necessary information to make a decision, answer any questions they might have about the applicant, and finally to make sure that they are reading our students accurately. After the initial phone call, we maintain regular contact with the colleges via phone calls and e-mail, updating them with any new information and advocating for our students. We repeat the grade reporting exercise with third and fourth quarter marks, particularly for students on the waiting list. While these are important and frequent communications, they are confidential. No decision is final until the letter is in the mail.

Q. How will the colleges know that a particular college is a student's top choice and that he or she would attend if accepted?

- A.** Throughout the college list building process, we have ask our students to identify their interest level in the colleges as either "first choice," "high," "medium," or "low." At the end of January, we will ask the seniors to rank order their colleges so we can know exactly their wishes. This will allow us to express their interest level directly to the colleges when we communicate with them. We also encourage students to communicate directly with their first choice school if they will definitely attend if accepted.

Q. Should students update the colleges during the spring on any new awards or accomplishments?

- A.** Yes! We strongly encourage students to update their application if there is good news to share. A student can send a quick note to the college admissions officer who is responsible for reading the Middlesex applicants. We are happy to give students the person's name and address. We will also be passing along the update, but it is important for the student to do it as well.

Q. When will the regular action decisions from the colleges be mailed?

- A.** Generally, colleges will begin mailing decisions in late March up through the first week of April. Most colleges post on their Web sites when they are mailing.

Q. Will the colleges ask for third quarter grades? How important are these grades?

- A.** Most highly selective colleges ask for third quarter grades before they make their final decisions in the middle of March. Middlesex third quarter grades will be available during the first week of March, and we will be sending them with commentary at this time. Senior grades are important measurements of achievement, engagement, and ability in the senior courses, which in many cases are the most difficult in the Middlesex curriculum. It is a chance for many students to prove themselves if they have a rising record, therefore we strongly encourage seniors to remain focused for the entire school year.

Q. Will the colleges ask for fourth quarter grades? How important are these grades?

- A.** At whatever college your child chooses to attend, his or her final grades will be evaluated by the admissions office. The college expects the student to finish his or her senior year at the same level of achievement that they have experienced in the past. A mild drop in performance is typically not a problem, but a dramatic change in the grades can be problematic. Colleges do ask students to explain any drop in their grades, and, in some cases, withdraw offers of admission.

If a student is waitlisted at his or her first choice school, the fourth quarter grades will be crucial in their campaign to convince the college to accept them off the waiting list. Some colleges withhold their final decision until the spring semester grades are available, while other colleges will ask for the most current update at the moment if they are making decisions in May. All in all, the grades matter for the entire stretch of the college process.