

Class of 2019
COLLEGE COUNSELING GUIDELINES FOR SENIOR FALL

1. College Visitors

Many college admissions officers will be coming to the Middlesex campus starting in mid-September to offer information sessions. As you do with all newcomers, please make these visitors feel welcome. They do not have to include Middlesex in their itinerary, so we want them to leave feeling that they have had a lively, engaging, and thoughtful time with our students. Be certain to see those college representatives who represent any places that you are considering attending. Please note that these are not interviews but can serve as a way to show demonstrated interest in a school.

- a. Please sign-up in the **Zebra** book in the college office, in advance, if you wish to attend a session. If you will miss a class, consider very carefully whether you can afford to miss the class; you certainly may not miss a major quiz or test. In order to be excused from a class you must ask permission of the teacher and have them sign the **white slip** (available in the College Office) **at least a full day before** the class meets. Otherwise, you will receive a cut for the class.
- b. If you cannot greet a visitor because of previous obligations, please stop by between classes, shake his/her hand, and/or leave a note of welcome (with your name on the note). Let them know how interested you are in applying and if you visited their campus.
- c. Every Wednesday, Tracy White will e-mail the class with the following week's visitors.
You can also check out the running list on the office website at mxschool.edu/college-counseling on the right side of the page.
- d. We also recommend that you follow up these meetings with a thank you note or an e-mail to the admissions officer. Gratitude goes a long way!

2. The Common Application

Once you have filled out all of the required questions, you can "Print Preview" your application and turn it into a PDF. Save the Common Application as a PDF and then e-mail it to your college counselor by **Wednesday, September 12th**.

Please note, you must have placeholder writing in the Personal Essay portion of the Writing Section to access the Print Preview option. It must be at least 250 words.

3. Essays

- a. Please e-mail a copy of your essays to your college counselor by **Wednesday, September 12th**, and we will work, systematically, to return them to you. We will be available many hours during the day to help. All early application supplemental essays must be in our hands as soon as possible if you would like our feedback. All regular decision drafts must be sent to us by **December 1st** (of course, we are

delighted to read any and all essays before these deadlines). Otherwise, we cannot guarantee that we will have sufficient time to work with you. We will offer suggestions about content, phrasing, tone and grammar. However, we expect you will have many other sets of eyes (teachers, friends, parents) assist you in proofreading your essays before they are sent.

- b. Make certain that you include the question asked and your name. No essay is too small to be reviewed. The most embarrassing mistakes are often made on the “small questions.”

4. Teacher Recommendations

Over the coming weeks, we will speak with each of you about teacher recommendations. It is very important that you do this part of the process promptly, face to face, and with respect. Your teachers will be submitting the recommendations electronically through Naviance, so timely communication with them is key.

Here is what you need to do:

- have a follow up conversation with your recommenders about your application deadlines.
- be certain to thank them both personally and in writing.

5. Art Portfolios, Music Recordings, and Theater Recordings/Auditions

If you intend to send colleges samples of your best work, it is critical that you develop a carefully crafted portfolio or music recording. The Middlesex art department is more than happy to work with our aspiring artists to produce a high quality digitally photographed portfolio. Please contact Stacey McCarthy as soon as possible to sort through the details. It takes a week to assemble the materials, take the photographs and produce the final piece. Musicians and singers are recommended to speak with Dr. Wetzel or Mr. Rabb for their assistance. Actors and actresses should connect with Tom Kane and Ryan DuBray. Most colleges will require you to submit your portfolio via Slide Room through your Common Application.

Please note, deadlines for portfolios, recordings, and auditions are often earlier and/or different than regular and early application deadlines. It is your responsibility to be aware of these different deadlines.

6. Once you have completed an application

Once your application is completed, proofread, and re-proofread, be certain to:

- have a credit card ready.
- print a copy your application and store the copy in a safe place.
- be certain that you are submitting your application in time to meet all necessary deadlines. (remember: postmarked or received by—check the college’s website for specifics)
- fill out a **yellow form** on Beth’s desk. We legally cannot mail our supporting material without this form signed by you.

7. Alumni Interviews and College Visiting Days

Most of you have already interviewed at many colleges this summer. There are still dozens of colleges which either require or offer alumni interviews. Once your application is in (early or regular) an alumni interviewer will contact you if the college offers them. **Check each college's website for their interviewing options.** It is crucial that you respond immediately to these calls, and establish a time to meet with the representatives. A good interview helps, a tepid or poor interview is not helpful. So prepare intelligently, be on time, look nice (no ties required), and know every detail you can gather about the college so that they are impressed with your understanding. Remember – no flip flops!

The school allows students only *two* official college visit days per semester. Most students will wish to hold those until the spring, when they can return to campuses to gain a sense for life on the campus. During the fall, many of you have personal days, or can take advantage of long weekends (Groton Weekend and Parents' Weekend), or the first two days of the Thanksgiving vacation (when colleges are in session, but we are not). Remember that small colleges expect you to visit, tour, and interview. Plan these trips well ahead. *The permission form is in the College Office.*

8. Early Action, Early Decision, and other early deadlines

Many of you are considering the advantages/disadvantages of Early Action or Early Decision. If you decide to apply early please let us know immediately, preferably before the 1st of October. We have a great deal of work to manage in order to support your applications.

Here are the steps to follow:

- speak with us about your final plans.
- immediately fill-out the **blue slip** on Beth's desk, so that we can begin to ready our side of the application materials.
- make certain that we see (if you wish our help) the early drafts of your essays (long and short), so that we have ample time to think about them, meet with you, leaving you sufficient time to devise your final draft.
- review your deadlines and make certain that you have allowed yourself ample time to prepare intelligently, while still maintaining your academic work.
- make certain that the faculty (and any other authors of letters of support) understand the deadline and realize that you are applying early.
- release test scores to the colleges officially through the College Board and/or ACT websites. Make sure you send the requested tests in a timely fashion. Any SAT tests taken in October or November should reach the colleges in time for EA, ED, but check each college's website for their specific expectations. With Score Choice as an option, please consult with your college counselor about releasing scores to the colleges if you have any questions.

9. Standardized Testing

As you know, you were responsible for registering for and fall test dates over the summer.

If you plan to take the ACT this fall and are a boarding student who will need transportation, please register to test at Andover High School (the public high school). Also, email Mr. Bigelow well in advance to reserve a seat on the bus to and from the test.

Before the test date and five days afterward, you can add for *free* four colleges to which you can send your scores. If you know you are applying to a particular school early, this is a great opportunity to send your scores for no cost.

Sending scores: If you are applying Early Action/Early Decision, we recommend you wait until you receive your scores from the October test date before sending them.

10. Discipline

Please remember: any disciplinary action that you face during your senior year will be reported directly to the colleges. Please exercise sound personal judgment and take care of each other. Nothing is more devastating than facing the ignominy of having your college future turned upside down because of poor decision making. Let's make sure that this entire class graduates with integrity.

SENIOR PASS/GRADE OPTION

During the fall and spring semesters of a student's Senior year, the Director of College Counseling in consultation with the Director of Studies may determine whether to place a number grade or a Pass (designated as a "P") on the report card and transcript of a Senior based on which grade best represents the student and the School in the college process.

A "P" may be substituted for a grade subject to the following conditions:

- No course taken to fulfill a specific departmental requirement may be selected.
- Advanced Placement courses cannot be taken PASS/GRADE.
- If the final grade in the course is *below* 70, the numerical grade stands and is counted in the student's semester average.
- Except when an approved Senior Project takes the place of more than one academic course, a minimum of four grades must appear on a transcript. That is, absent extraordinary mitigating circumstances, a Senior transcript will report no more than one "P" in each semester.
- The Director of College Counseling in consultation with the Director of Studies will determine whether to place a number grade or a "P" on a Senior's report card and transcript based on which grade best represents the student and the School in the college process (a grade of 80 or higher is almost never replaced by a P). A grade of "P" will not be used solely to inflate a student's grade point average for Middlesex School academic honors and awards.