



Selective College Admissions

Five Important Tips

Webinar: Sept 17 at 12:00 noon

A few important notes:

- Our priority in the college counseling program at Minnetonka High School – helping the student to find the right fit!
- Our hope – that our students will focus on **going** to a college that is a good match, but not focus on **getting in**.
- Every student is encouraged to follow this application guideline –
“You apply for admission to a college because you would like to go there!”

Categories of selectivity – What does “selective” mean?

- Most selective – acceptance rate below 15%
(Harvard, Princeton, University of Chicago, Yale)
- Highly selective – acceptance rate of 15-30%
(Boston University, Carleton, Colgate, Emory, Georgetown)
- Moderately selective – acceptances of 31-60%
(Denison, Denver, Macalester, Providence, St. Olaf)
- Selective – acceptances of 61-90% (Drake, Hamline, Iowa State, Marquette, Nebraska, St. Thomas)

Most selective



- University of Chicago – freshman class of 1,726

Applicants	34,641
Admitted	2,137 (6%)
ACT mid-50 th	33-35
Top 10%	99%
% Graduating	95%

Highly selective

Carleton College

- Carleton College – freshman class of 525

Applicants	7,324
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Admitted	1,401 (19%)
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ACT mid-50 th	31-34
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Top 10%	71%
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% Graduating	92%
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Highly selective



- Boston University – freshman class of 3,156

Applicants	62,224
Admitted	11,786 (20%)
ACT mid-50 th	30-33
Top 10%	64%
% Graduating	88%

Moderately selective



UNIVERSITY *of*
DENVER

- University of Denver – freshman class of 1,351

Applicants	21,028
Admitted	12,345 (58%)
ACT mid-50 th	26-31
Top 10%	39%
% Graduating	77%

Selective



- Drake University – freshman class of 782

Applicants	6,944
Admitted	4,697 (68%)
ACT mid-50 th	24-30
Top 10%	39%
% Graduating	82%

Early application options

- Early Decision – students make a **binding commitment** to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they must enroll. Nov 1 or Nov 15 deadlines.
- Early Action – students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the college's regular decision deadline. **Not binding**. Nov 1/Nov 15 deadlines. National candidate reply date of May 1.
- Restrictive Early Action – a few colleges limit applications in the EA round (e.g., Georgetown, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, Yale)

Other application options

- Regular Decision – students apply to an institution by a specified date and receive a decision by the end of March, or earlier. Deadlines vary, but most are Jan 1, Jan 15, or Feb 1. National candidate reply date of May 1.
- Rolling admission – the institution reviews applications as they are completed and makes admission decisions on a continuous basis. National candidate reply date of May 1.

Early Decision and Regular Decision

SCHOOL	EARLY DECISION ACCEPTANCE RATE	REGULAR DECISION ACCEPTANCE RATE	PERCENT OF CLASS FILLED FROM EARLY DECISION	ED TO RD ACCEPTANCE RATIO
Bates College	46.3%	10.2%	81%	4.6
Claremont McKenna College	35.1%	10.4%	70.5%	3.4
Colgate University	45.1%	25.0%	62.5%	1.8
Davidson College	46.9%	16.5%	59.0%	2.8
Emory University	27.1%	18.2%	59.8%	1.5
Lafayette College	51.1%	34.1%	59.7%	1.5
Lehigh University	72.7%	47.2%	59.5%	1.5
Middlebury College	46.8%	19.6%	65.1%	2.4
Pitzer College	36.9%	14.0%	79.5%	2.6
Scripps College	50.4%	33.7%	63.1%	1.5
Swarthmore College	23.8%	7.7%	63.4%	3.1
Washington University St. Louis	34.7%	13.7%	60.0%	2.5
Wesleyan University	41.3%	18.9%	63.9%	2.2

Common Data Set 2020-2021

A few national statistics (reality check!)

- Enrollment in US colleges and universities

Total undergraduate	16,576,615
Total graduate	3,088,811
Public 4-year institutions	9,106,573
Public 2-year institutions	5,398,099
Private 4-year institutions	4,118,370
For-profit, 4-year institutions	841,439

Enrollment at Minnesota colleges and universities

Total undergraduate	289,319
Total graduate	113,410
Public 4-year institutions	127,297
Public 2-year institutions	114,455
Private 4-year institutions	70,135
For-profit 4-year institutions	90,627

Almanac Issue, August 2021 Chronicle of Higher Education

Other key data points:

- 6-year graduation rate (in USA) at 4-year institutions 63.8%
- 6-year graduation rate in Minnesota 67.1%
- Percent of first-year students who attend college within their home state 82.2%
- Percent of students who applied to five or fewer colleges/universities 61.1%
- Percent of students who are attending their first or second choice college 82.7%

Resources for research on selective colleges

- <https://student.naviance.com/minnetonka>
- [Fiske Guide to Colleges](#)
- [Princeton Review: The Best 386 Colleges](#)
- [Barron's Guide to the Most Competitive Colleges](#)
- [The Insider's Guide to the Colleges](#)
- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>
- <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>
- <https://myintuition.org/>
- <https://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>

Fiske Guide – “the top rated guide to the best colleges” (about 300 schools)

- 34 up to 15% acceptance rate
- 69 from 15 to 30% acceptance rate
- 102 from 31 to 60% acceptance rate
- 99 from 61 to 99% acceptance rate

Five Important Tips for Selective Admission

1. Students/parents need to be on “the same page” for college cost, affordability, and financial plans
2. Take an appropriately challenging course of study, with as much rigor as possible
3. Determine whether any college(s) will require ACT or SAT scores
<https://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>
4. Examine closely the early decision/early action options to determine your best strategy and fit
5. Take special care with the “Why us?” essay, or the “What would you add to the Class of 2026?” essay

Bonus round: Five More Important Tips

6. Beat the application deadline by a few weeks -- if it's due on January 1, apply by Dec. 1
7. If a teacher recommendation is needed, pick someone who knows you well – and talk to them early on!
8. Take advantage of the visits by college admission reps at MHS – often, they will be a reader of your application!
9. Expand your college list to include both “competitive” options and “likely” options. Be realistic with your list!
10. Spend as much time thinking about “going” to a college as you spend time thinking about “getting in” to a college.

Transcript Release form

- As soon as you know where you are applying, submit a Transcript Release form to MHS, which includes instructions on “how to apply.”

<https://www.minnetonkaschools.org/schools/high-school/mhs/counseling/transcripts>

MINNETONKA HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT RELEASE				
NAME (last, first)		GRAD YEAR	BIRTHDATE	CELL PHONE
STUDENT EMAIL		TODAY'S DATE		
CIRCLE YOUR COUNSELOR:		Dave Bierly Brad Burnham Theresa Exenberger Monica Jones Cassie Klein Conor Maher Stephanie McClendon Kendra Olson Sarah Seldon Amanda Wavrin		
I authorize Minnetonka High School to release my official transcript to the place(s) indicated below:				
Student's Signature		Parent's Signature (if under 18)		
COLLEGE(S) or SCHOLARSHIP*:				
School:	College Deadline:			
	Early Action/Decision:	Y	N	
City/State:	Common Application?	Y	N	
	Counselor Recommendation Required?	Y	N	
How to Apply to College: - Submit each completed application directly to the college. - Using the Common App? If yes: - Complete the FERPA Release Form in your Common App account.				

Final thoughts

- The goal of the college admission office is to enroll a well-rounded class – a community of individuals who add a unique talent or characteristic to the class. The operative question in selective and highly selective admissions is: **“What will this student add to our college?”**
- Make your case – why is this college a good match for you? Spend time on doing the application well. Submit your application ahead of the deadline!

- In America, people succeed because of the quality of their character, not the fame of their college.
- Know that what you do in college is a better predictor of future success and happiness than where you go to college. (from the Education Conservancy.)

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