Overcoming the Impossible

2020-2021
College Guide- A guide written for Paterson students by Paterson students
In a year where nothing was normal, students across the city of Paterson and around the world struggled with finding new ways to be successful.

What seemed like an impossible concept two years ago became a reality for the students in the Paterson school, who spent almost a year and a half learning from behind a computer screen.

Though it seemed impossible, we made it very possible. Although some struggled, we all made it through, better and a bit stronger than we were before. We learned to take the “impossible” and turn it into “I’m possible.”


Advisor: Amy Rios, Journalism III teacher

The Paterson Education Fund is proud to sponsor the 2020-2021 edition of the College Guide produced for Paterson students by Paterson students.

Articles represent the views of student authors. Responses/inquiries are welcome. The Journalism Office can be contacted at 973-321-1000 Ext.50025 or by writing to the JFK Educational Complex, Journalism Office, 61-127 Preakness Ave., Paterson, NJ.

The Paterson Education Fund can be contacted at 451 Van Houten Street, Paterson, NJ 07501, 973-881-1914.
www.paterson-education.org
During the four years of high school most students start learning more about themselves and their future goals. This is the time students need to start preparing for college.

High school is like a “starting point” before college. You learn a lot, you work hard to get good grades, and start to prepare for college. Teachers and guidance counselors can help you with the whole college process, including writing recommendations and helping you choose a college that’s right for you.

Although teachers and guidance counselors will help, you need to do the majority of the work yourself. Here is a checklist of tasks to do throughout your four years that will help you navigate your way to college.

### Freshman Year:
- Focus on grades
- Get involved. Join clubs, after-school activities, etc.
- Plan on taking advanced courses
- Develop time management skills
- Practice the PSAT
- Take the PSAT
- Ask for tutoring if you are having a difficult time with a subject

### Sophomore Year:
- Maintain good grades
- Get involved in extracurricular activities
- Forge positive relationships with teachers who you may ask for letters of recommendations
- Create a list of colleges you may want to attend
- Research colleges

### Junior Year:
- Stay involved in extracurricular activities
- Schedule your college admissions tests (SAT/ACT)
- Stay on track with your courses and take any AP or dual enrollment classes that are available
- Have a summer job or an internship
- Make a list of your top colleges
- Start to research and apply for scholarships

### Senior Year:
- Retake college admissions tests
- Secure any final teacher recommendations
- Apply to colleges of your choice
- Fill out college applications
- DON’T WAIT LAST MINUTE
- Be on the lookout for acceptance letters
- Apply for more scholarships
- Choose the college of your choice
- Prepare for your college experience

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### Student Voices

**I kept my grades up, stayed in contact with my guidance counselor and started looking online at colleges I may be interested in attending.**

Diamond Anderson, Freshman RPHS

**I participated in college and career week to learn more things about college and which college will be best for me. Thanks to FSCS and Compete4Life I also started my college resume.**

Fariha Begum Poly, Sophomore, STEM

**I went to a lot of information sessions hosted by schools that held my interest. I researched those schools; their admissions requirements, campus life, academic programs, extracurricular activities, scholarship opportunities and even internship opportunities. This gave me a broad insight into what it would look like to go to that school and what I would gain from it.**

Jestina Brown, Junior SET

**I stayed in constant contact with my guidance counselor so I wouldn’t miss important deadlines.**

Fatima Amidou, Senior BTMF
Do you believe you can be the next Einstein? Paterson Public high schools have all that you need to become whatever you want to be. Paterson Public Schools has a variety of schools, which offer many different thematic programs for students. In the Paterson Public School District, there are twelve different high schools with unique concepts. Due to each school's high graduation rate, students are more likely to be prepared for life beyond high school.

The Paterson Public School District is a community public school district that serves students in pre-k to 12th grade in Paterson, New Jersey, USA. The 2019-2020 total district high school enrollment was 23,000 students. With more than 40 languages spoken in its classrooms, the Paterson Public School District is among the most diverse in the state. The population of Paterson Public High Schools consists of about 66.9 percent Hispanic, 22.2 percent African-Americans, 5.6 Asians and 5.0 Caucasians.

The twelve district high schools each have their own focus and career pathways.

The John F. Kennedy Educational Complex consists of four different types of academies:

- **School of Science Mathematics Engineering Technology (STEM)**
  This is a four-year high school that is focused on engineering and medical studies. STEM Academy’s graduation rate is 89%.

- **School of Architecture and Construction Trade (ACT)**
  This is a four-year high school that is focused on architecture and construction work. ACT Academy’s graduation rate is 80%.

- **School of Education and Training (SET)**
  This is a four-year high school that is focused on teaching. SET Academy’s graduation rate is 84%.

- **School of Information Technology (SOIT)**
  This is a four-year high school that is focused on motivating students to develop, operate, maintain, manage and integrate hardware, and software. SOIT Academy’s graduation rate is 89%.

There are three different high schools on the Eastside campus.
High schools that lead to success

- **School of Government & Public Administration (GOPA)**
  This is a four-year high school that is focused on the environment and encourages dignity, and independence. GOPA Academy’s graduation rate is 85%.

- **School of Culinary Arts, Hospitality & Tourism (CAHT)**
  This is a four-year high school that is focused on developing the necessary skills to run modern urban institutions. CAHT Academy’s graduation rate is 92%.

**Rosa L. Parks School of Fine & Performing Arts**
This is a four-year high school that is focused on Drama, Music, Communication Arts, and Fine & Commercial Art. Rosa L. Parks School of Fine & Performing Arts graduation rate is 97%.

**Garrett Morgan Academy for Transportation and Engineering**
This is a four-year high school that is focused on exploring career options in engineering and transportation. Garrett Morgan Academy’s graduation rate is 91%.

**Academy of Earth and Space Science (PANTHER)**
This is a four-year high school that is focused on Science and Technology. PANTHER Academy’s graduation rate is 93%.

**Academy of Health Science (HARP)**
This is a four-year high school that is focused on research in health and related professions. HARP Academy’s graduation rate is 97%.

Kawsar Tasnim, a 2020 graduate from the School of Education & Training believed that the Paterson Public School district tried its best to prepare students for college. The schools held meetings with juniors and seniors every month to talk about college, standardized tests, and scholarships.

Tasnim said, “The schools offered different types of after school activities and elective classes that will prepare students for college. The school I went to offered a “College Guide” class to juniors, which helped them understand how college works, when the students should apply for college, how to write a resume, college essays, apply for scholarships and the different kinds of loans. The school also offered Advanced Placement classes and dual enrollment courses, which helped prepare students for college classes.”

“I had great experiences as a student in the Paterson Public School district. The teachers I had were extraordinarily helpful. They always made sure that the students were doing well in all of their classes. They told me not to miss any opportunity that would help me in the future. They told me to believe in myself. Their words inspired me to work hard, which motivated me to do well academically and personally.”
As a high school student you see yourself attending college in the future, but have you thought about the SAT or ACT and which one is meant for you?

Understand that colleges use these tests to compare students. “A good score can boost your admission chances for more prestigious universities,” said Tanvir Ahmed, an International High School graduate and college senior at NJIT.

The SAT is a test administered by College Board. It has five sections: evidence-based reading, writing & language, math (no calculator), math (calculator) and the optional essay section. The majority of the questions are multiple choice, with the exception of some math questions.

The ACT is a test administered by the ACT organization. It has five sections: English, Math, Reading, Science and the optional writing. The required sections are all multiple choice.

“Whether you want to take the SAT or ACT, it’s important to consistently practice,” says Shahriyar Ahmed, JFK STEM graduate and sophomore at Montclair State University.

The most notable difference is that the ACT has a Science section. More importantly, colleges DON’T prefer one test over the other. In fact, “college admission counselors have openly stated that they do not prefer one test over another.” (“Do Colleges Prefer the ACT or SAT? - College Raptor,” 2 June 2020.)
Earning college credit in high school
By Nadira Ali

High schools across the nation offer students the opportunity to earn college credits while they are still in high school. The two most prevalent types of college level high school courses are Advanced Placement classes (AP) and dual enrollment classes.

If you are struggling to determine which course is better for you or are wondering which classes colleges prefer, you’ve come to the right place. Read on for the answers to all of your questions about college accredited high school courses.

The AP program is offered through the College Board. It is made up of college level courses as varied as AP music theory to AP calculus (for a complete list of AP courses available, click [here]); however, keep in mind that every high school does not offer all of the AP courses. In order to earn college credits, students must take and pass the AP subject exam. A passing score is dependent on the college that you hope to transfer the credits to. For example, a passing score is a 3, but some colleges only accept scores of a 4 or 5.

Dual enrollment classes are offered through specific colleges. They are college level courses taught in your high school. In order to earn the college credits students only need to pass the class. There is no high stakes test at the end of the course that needs to be passed in order to earn the credits. A possible downside of the dual enrollment class is that the credit may not be accepted by the college you attend.

According to Zoe Beers in her article “What’s On Your Transcript? AP vs. Dual Enrollment” which appear on Medium.com, colleges don’t have a preference when it comes to AP and dual enrollment classes. It is a matter of choosing which type of class will work best for you. “Both are accelerated courses, so they will be more rigorous than a normal high school class, and both are graded based on a five-point GPA scale, so they boost students' GPA,” said Beers. “High school students have (the opportunity) to build an advanced course load in order to make themselves look more attractive to top universities they are reaching for acceptances from.”
College-prep programs are exactly what they sound like. They are designed to help prepare students to successfully prepare for and attend college. In the city of Paterson, there are numerous programs available for high school students that will guide them on their path to higher education.

Students who participate in these programs have the opportunity to visit various colleges, take part in test prep courses, get help filling out college applications and financial aid paperwork.

These programs usually take place after school, during the summer or on the weekends. Students should contact their guidance counselors for information on city-wide college prep programs.

Syeda Begum, a senior from SET Academy, was involved in many college-prep programs, one of which was through the Full Service Community School. “FSCS helped me throughout the college application process by hosting multiple FAFSA workshops and assisting me with my FAFSA completion. FSCS also hosted many other college-related workshops such as College Application 101, College Essay 101, and Resume Building. These workshops helped me gain basic knowledge of the application process and helped me fulfill components of college applications efficiently. FSCS has helped me prepare for college in many ways. Some specific skills it gave me were, networking & self-branding, proper breakdown knowledge of college money and loans, and leadership skills. These skills will not only help me in college, and they will help in real life as well.”

The Center For Pre-College Programs is a college prep program offered through various New Jersey colleges and universities, like NJIT and Rutgers. Although their 2020-2021 spring, summer and fall programs were all virtual, there was still many active participation opportunities for students. The top priority of the program was to provide students with rich, culturally relevant, academically authentic and safe learning experiences. The program was committed to supporting educators and families in providing high quality STEM learning.
Taking college prep courses provides students with college experience while they are still in high school. UpWard Bound Math and Science is a pre-college program for high school students. It is a six week summer program that allows participants to gain an on-campus experience. UpWard Bound is open to high school students the summer before their sophomore year and ends after senior year. Every Wednesday, tutoring sessions are held after school from 3:30pm to 4:30pm. These tutoring sessions help participants prepare for the SAT’s and provide homework assistance. They are held either in the John F. Kennedy Educational Complex or Eastside High School.

Between having alternate classes every other day and living in the dorms, UpWard Bound also offers help with the courses you currently take in high school and offer college related activities. You take English I, II, and III over the years, each year you read a different book and complete a project on it. Other classes you take vary between which classes you already have during the school year. For example, your science classes vary between Chemistry, Biology, and Physics. Each year you take either Latin I, Latin II, or Latin III. These classes help you to better understand meaning of words based on their Latin derivatives. You also take either Sophomore Seminar, where you discuss investments, Junior Seminar, helps you find various scholarship sites and building your resume, and Senior Seminar, helps with FAFSA and other student aids as well as college applications.

I see UpWard Bound as a great opportunity to grow myself, academically and personally. Being in this program has helped me prepare for college by not only focusing on teaching me about the application process and other things I’d need to do, they also prepare me mentally. UpWard Bound is a fun learning experience.

-Jestina Brown. SET class of 2022

Being in UpWard Bound makes me feel like I’m taking initiative for a stronger future. UpWard Bound allows me to interact with new people and provides a number of resources that I did not have access to as a regular student.

-Farhan Uddin, STEM class of 2022

School of Business, Technology, Marketing & Finance senior Arnett Pena, an UpWard Bound graduate, will attend MSU after learning valuable skills through the program.

Due to the coronavirus and social distancing, many activities were held virtually. UpWard Bound meetings were held remotely; however, they still provided many of the same activities. To the left is a photo of Upward Bound students, two teachers, and two counselors during an after class activity. Some activities included:

- Game night - Random Kahoots
- Movie night - Tik tok night
- Art night - Cooking night
Make your college application stand out with interesting extracurricular activities. Your application is all about showcasing the cool things you’ve done during your high school career. It gives the admissions committee a peek into your personality and interests.

When you think about writing your college application resume, you tend to think about perfecting it so you appear as outstanding as possible. If you’re involved in different clubs, programs, and/or organizations then colleges can’t deny you, right? In reality it’s the opposite. Colleges look at your resumes, as well as your essays, to get a gist of who you really are. They can’t do that when they see you’re in a variety of clubs. Administration officers would rather see you involved in two or three clubs that you feel extremely passionate about, rather than you being in a million different activities.

“Being a part of extracurricular activities helped me learn new skills and expand upon skills I already had or helps you learn new skills and you need skills in college,” said Israa Hamdan, SET class of 2021.

Benefits of participating in extracurricular activities in college:

➔ Connects students with the college and creates a sense of belonging
➔ Connects students with the same interests
➔ Helps build self confidence
➔ Helps students better prioritize their time
➔ Possible career connections for after graduation
➔ Participation is a productive break from studying
➔ Broadens your social circles
➔ Can lead to a part-time or full-time job

Khadija Miah, STEM class of 2021, says her experience with participating in various extracurricular activities helped her better prepare for college. She was a part of several different clubs and organizations and each one helped her better prepare for college. “Being in the Full Service Community School Student Ambassador Program helped me develop leadership skills. Robotics taught me how to build robots and develop many skills such as leadership, communication, and time management skills. The college prep part of robotics helped me learn more about college and how to prepare for it. It also helped me give back to our city by doing community service.”

Sometimes taking extracurriculars helps students realize that what they thought they wanted to pursue in college was not actually a good fit. “The Society of Engineers taught me more about engineering, I thought I wanted to study engineering in college, but changed my mind,” said Miah.

Jestina Brown, SET class of 2022 credits the extracurricular activities she participated in with teaching her valuable life skills. “Not only do extracurriculars help to boost my brag sheet for college, but they also give me experience in juggling activities that I enjoy. A skill I will need for college and life in general. My extracurriculars help to make me into a well-rounded person and will help me get accepted into my dream school.”

Click here to watch a video on the four types of extracurricular activities.
College Requirements

What are the required classes to take to gain admission to colleges and do you believe you have completed all of those courses? This is one of the most common questions that students have. Essentially, these course requirements serve to prepare you for the rigorous college education.

In general, standard requirements for college include four years of gym and health, four years of English, two to three years of foreign language, three years of math, two to three years of science including lab science, two to three years of history, and one year of art. In addition to this, some colleges require you to take the SAT or ACT and submit an adequate score.

It is important to note that school transcripts must be submitted to your intended college. Additionally, you should fall into the habit of completing tasks prior to the deadline, rather than procrastinating, as this gives you a sufficient amount of time to think and plan ahead.

Overall, as students it is your responsibility to complete all of the requirements to gain college admission. Remember, if you have any further questions, you should get in touch with your school guidance counselor.

- Ask your guidance counselor for a copy of your transcript. It helps to see which classes you need to take or retake.
- Start researching colleges and universities and check their websites to see if they require any type of test score or test to be taken.

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Do what you have to do until you can do what you want to do.

- Oprah Winfrey
The Financial Aid You Deserve!
By: Emad Rouf

Free Degrees
Do you want to avoid future student loan debts? Say no more! Take advantage of the NJ STARS programs. Get an associate degree for free. You can take it further, and get a bachelor’s degree for reduced costs!

NJ STARS I

- With the significant rise of college tuition costs, many students are giving up on college. While that may be a deterrent, understand that there are programs instituted to help low income students get the education they deserve.
- The New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) Program rewards high achieving NJ students with free tuition at their home county college.
- Visit the NJ STARS site at https://www.hesaa.org/Documents/FactSheets/NJSTARS/FactSheetfor2021HSGrad.pdf to learn more about the program.

NJ STARS II

- This is the continuation of the NJ STARS I program, and it is intended for NJ students who are pursuing a four-year degree at a public college or university.
- It rewards high achieving NJ STARS graduates with additional money for tuition. The higher their GPA, the higher the reward.
- Visit the NJ STARS II site at https://www.hesaa.org/Documents/FactSheets/NJSTARSII/FactSheetforCollegeTransfersWhoBegan2011-12.pdf to learn more about this program.

Student Perspective

“I chose not to use the NJ STARS grant. My family encouraged me to take a different approach because they thought I should go to a four-year college. I worked so hard in high school they thought I deserved the best. I would still recommend this program to other students. I think it’s a great opportunity. If you are planning to go to a two-year college, you should grab this opportunity. It will help you a lot in the future.”

-Shahana Begum, SET Class of 2021

“NJ STARS helped me create my future by giving me a sense of security. College is expensive and a lot of students don’t have the privilege to attend a four-year university straight out of high school. With the NJ STARS scholarship, I’m not only granted a scholarship for community college, but I am also given a chance to receive the NJ STARS II. The NJ STARS II serves as my reminder to continue to strive for greatness and perform to the best of my abilities. I would highly recommend this scholarship for other students, especially those who worry about college expenses.”

-Samantha Marte, ACT Class of 2021
How to Write the Essay and Apply

To begin with, applying for colleges seems to be difficult for the upcoming applicants. Well, I'm here to say that it is not as difficult as it is made out to be. I will be discussing tips on how to apply and how to write the college application essay.

First, the main thing to keep in mind are the deadlines for both the application and the essay that comes with it. Read each and every instruction thoroughly. Answer everything that is asked thoroughly. Once done with that, it is important to proofread everything that you have written.

Now let's discuss how to write the introduction to the college essay. To start off, you have to figure out exactly what you are going to write about. The type of essay that is recommended the most is a personal essay. Your story needs to include facts about who you are as a person. This calls for introducing yourself truthfully and specifically. Tell the readers something that they already don't know about you. Make sure the hook is attention grabbing.

In each of the body paragraphs, you should include examples after your topic is settled in your story. Specific examples may include any beliefs you have or unique traits. If you want you can use some dialogue in your essay.

Once your essay is completed, proofread it and then ask someone else to proofread it. You can ask a parent, teacher, guidance counselor or a friend. The more eyes on it, the better. If you feel that your proofreading isn't good enough, then ask someone else to proofread it for you.

No matter what topic you choose, the essay will ultimately be yourself. According to Ethan Sawyer, the founder of the College Essay Guy website, which offers free and paid essay-writing resources. "What we think of as the topic is just the frame or the lens that we're using to get into other parts of you."

Writing the college essay—Do’s & don’ts

→ Keep your main idea narrow and personal
→ Focus on one aspect of yourself
→ Ask a parent or teacher to proofread it
→ Don’t explore too many topics
→ Don’t include information that is already in your application
→ Don’t make excuses for bad grades

Student Perspective

As a student who graduated from Panther Academy in 2019 and who now attends Montclair State University, Zeyneb Hasan’s best advice regarding the college essay is to get it done as early as possible. "I would say to make sure your college essay is done before you start applying because that is one of the most important aspects of the college application. Colleges look at the essay in order to have better insight into who you are as a person and as a student," said Hasan.

Click the image to your right to watch a video filled with valuable information on writing your college essay. Make sure you leave plenty of time to make all necessary edits.

If the thought of writing a different essay for each college that you apply to seems intimidating, check out the Common Application. The Common App is accepted by 900 colleges and universities.
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<td>Montclair State University</td>
<td>One Normal Ave., Upper Montclair, NJ 07043</td>
<td><a href="http://www.montclair.edu">www.montclair.edu</a></td>
<td>$13,073</td>
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<td>New Jersey City University</td>
<td>2039 Kennedy Blvd., Jersey City, NJ 07305</td>
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<td>$12,414</td>
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<td>N.J. Institute of Technology</td>
<td>University Heights; Newark, NJ 07102-1982</td>
<td><a href="http://www.njit.edu">www.njit.edu</a></td>
<td>$17,674</td>
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<td>Ocean County College</td>
<td>College Drive, PO Box 2001, Toms River, NJ 08754-2001</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ocean.edu">www.ocean.edu</a></td>
<td>$5,115</td>
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<td>Passaic County Comm. College</td>
<td>One College Blvd., Paterson, NJ 07505-1179</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pccc.edu">www.pccc.edu</a></td>
<td>$7,350</td>
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<td>Princeton University</td>
<td>PO Box 430, Princeton, NJ 08544</td>
<td><a href="http://www.princeton.edu">www.princeton.edu</a></td>
<td>$52,800</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.ramapo.edu">www.ramapo.edu</a></td>
<td>$14,678</td>
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<td>Raritan Valley Comm. College</td>
<td>PO Box 3300, Somerville, NJ 08876</td>
<td><a href="http://www.raritanval.edu">www.raritanval.edu</a></td>
<td>$6,052</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rider University</td>
<td>2083 Lawrenceville Rd., PO Box 3001, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rider.edu">www.rider.edu</a></td>
<td>$44,460</td>
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<td>Rowan University</td>
<td>Savitz Hall, 201 Mullica Hill Rd., Glassboro, NJ 08028</td>
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<td>Rutgers State University (Camden)</td>
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<td>Rutgers State University (New Brunswick)</td>
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<td>Seton Hall University</td>
<td>400 South Orange Ave., South Orange, NJ 07079</td>
<td><a href="http://www.shu.edu">www.shu.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stevens Institute of Technology</td>
<td>1 Castle Point on the Hudson, Hoboken, NJ 07030</td>
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<td>$54,014</td>
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<td>Sussex County Comm. College</td>
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<tr>
<td>The College of New Jersey</td>
<td>PO Box 7718, Ewing, NJ 08628</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tcnj.edu">www.tcnj.edu</a></td>
<td>$16,923</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Stockton University</td>
<td>Jim Leeds Rd., PO Box 195, Pomona, NJ 08240-0195</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stockton.edu">www.stockton.edu</a></td>
<td>$14,048</td>
<td>$12,870</td>
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<td>Thomas Edison State College</td>
<td>101 West State St., Trenton, NJ 08608</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tesc.edu">www.tesc.edu</a></td>
<td>$7,926</td>
<td>$7,512</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMDNJ, Sch of Health Prof. Schl</td>
<td>65 Bergen St., Rm. 101, Newark, NJ 06510</td>
<td><a href="http://www.shrp.umdnj.edu">www.shrp.umdnj.edu</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.wpunj.edu">www.wpunj.edu</a></td>
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<td>973-408-3000</td>
<td>2,113</td>
<td>4-yr. private co-ed university w/graduate &amp; professional schls</td>
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<td>732-987-2633</td>
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<td>4-yr. private liberal arts university</td>
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<td>908-737-5326</td>
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<td>732-445-4636</td>
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<td>888-772-9933</td>
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<td>973-972-5454</td>
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<td>973-720-2000</td>
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Scholarships are one of the many ways that students pay for college. Every scholarship is unique and can range from a few hundred dollars to several thousand. You can use scholarship money to pay your tuition, room and board, and other miscellaneous college expenses. Do you know what’s the best part? The money that you receive from scholarships is yours to keep, which means you do not have to pay it back.

Scholarship awards can be based on financial need, academic performance or merit. They usually cover a specific area of study, interest, qualification or achievement and can be funded by many different sources (schools, private businesses, foundations, non-profit groups, and other organizations). There are several ways to find scholarships. A good place to start is at your school, whether you’re still in high school or already enrolled in college. If scholarship information is not available on the school’s website, you can contact your guidance counselor or advisor to find the right resources.

Guidance counselors can also help you understand each application and give feedback on your essays and forms. You should also check out free online databases, which allow you to search thousands of available scholarships.

Scholarship search engines:
- https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-scholarships.aspx
- https://finaid.org/scholarships/
- http://home.myscholly.com/#scholly
- https://www.cappex.com/
- http://www.fastweb.com/
- https://www.scholarships.com/

Apply for scholarships that require an essay because a lot of people apply for the easier ones.
- Nuha Khalique, SET 2021

My advice is to start applying for scholarships during your junior year in high school.
- Israa Hamdan, SET 2021

Don’t ignore any opportunities that come your way.
- Jhonen Escobar, SET 2021

Scholarship Tips
- You should start applying during your sophomore or junior year
- Not all scholarship offers you receive or find online are legitimate, so be careful
- You should not be required to pay a fee in order to apply for a scholarship
- Apply to as many scholarships as you can
- Focus on scholarships you are a good match for
- Don’t skip scholarships for smaller amounts
- Apply for scholarships as soon as they become available
You got into college, now how will you pay for it?

By Sadia Ahmed

Want to know how to pay for college? Well, this is the right place for you, keep on reading.

The time is coming for high school students to think about college and, yes it can get overwhelming.

In terms of financial aid, you should start with the FAFSA, which stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The FAFSA is what will provide your federal financial aid.

The deadline for FAFSA is always on June 30th. It is better to apply as early as possible instead of waiting until the last minute because the earlier you apply, the more likely you are to qualify for student aid.

It is also always best to go to a guidance counselor to get more information on FAFSA or the website studentaid.ed.gov because it can be confusing. You can also get help from The Full Service Community School or check out Khan Academy, they have a section about how to pay for college.

Want to know how to pay for college? Well, this is the right place for you, keep on reading. The time is coming for high school students to think about college and, yes it can get overwhelming.

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Types of aid available through the FAFSA

- Scholarships
- Grants
- Loans
- Work study

Financial aid is money that can help students pay for college, and it can come from federal and state governments, colleges and universities, and private organizations.

Steps on filling out the FAFSA

- Make a list of colleges
- Gather important documents
- Create an ID, start from desired year
- Follow instructions carefully

Tutorials to help you through the process

- How to fill out the FAFSA by Federal Student Aid
- Types of federal aid by Federal Student Aid
EOF may be a great opportunity for you to start your college life. The Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) is a 6 week state sponsored program available to students who have the will and desire to go to college but need additional academic and financial support.

EOF was established in 1968 by the New Jersey State Legislature and the efforts of Freshman Assemblyman, Thomas Kean. Since then, the EOF program has grown to serve over 40,000 students, with approximately 13,000 served annually.

Shimanna Uddin was a senior in the STEM academy in 2012. Uddin knew that she wanted to attend college, but sometimes it felt outside of her reach. She struggled a lot because she had recently come to the United States and, due to language barriers, she had a difficult time navigating the college application process. Luckily, her guidance counselor helped her through it and got her enrolled in the EOF program at Montclair State University, where she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in mathematics.

There are specific requirements that students must meet in order to qualify for EOF. Click on the image on the right to watch an informative video from Rutgers University.

Tamanna Murshed, a 2012 graduate from the School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and a 2016 graduate from Montclair State University (MSU) through the EOF program. “There are no disadvantages to joining EOF. No matter what you do in the EOF program, there is always an advantage,” said Murshed.

According to Uddin and Murshed, EOF has helped them in many ways. Both agreed that EOF helped them by giving them access to the school campus the summer before they started at MSU. They learned their way around campus, which enabled them to get comfortable with their surroundings.

Advice Uddin and Murshed would give to incoming EOF students is to enjoy themselves and to get the most out of the program. It is a great opportunity to make friends and to make connections, which can help students in their college life and in the future.

They both said that they learned many important skills required for college, such as how to rent books, how to check out books from the library, communication skills, and math skills.

How To Apply
- Apply for Undergraduate Admission into a New Jersey college or university
- Submit the Supplemental EOF application (FIRST YEAR ONLY)
- Submit the 2020-2021 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application (NJAFSA)
- Create an ID and password for the New Jersey Financial Aid Management System (NJFAMS)
According to https://www.saintpeters.edu/academics/programs-services, there are many benefits in joining EOF. The program can help academically and financially.

**Benefits:**

**Academically:**
- Students have access to free tutoring
- Have peer mentoring, also academic and personal coaching
- Students have access to a network of professors that help them become stronger academically.
- They have a 6-week enrichment program prior to their freshman year of college

**Financially:**
- All students who are eligible receive a $2,650 grant
- All students who are eligible receive $1,325 per semester to pay for tuition and other things regarding college such as books.
- Students who come from a disadvantaged background don’t have to worry about how they will pay for college or if they will be able to manage the costs of the college or the cost of books.

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**EOF Student Voice**

My advice to all future EOF students is to enjoy yourself as much as you can in this program and to get the most out of it. It provides a great opportunity to make friends and to make connections before you actually start college.

Try to stay connected to as many people you can, for example your tutors, your counselors, and the teachers in this program because they will be the ones who can help you get through college. People may tell you that connections aren’t necessary but trust me having strong connections with people will make your life much easier than you will ever realize.

All students should explore the campus and get to know their way around before their freshman year starts. This is a wonderful opportunity to help you work through any fear that you may have and help you feel more comfortable on campus. The six-week program will also help you to understand what college life is before you actually begin.

Take this opportunity seriously because the program can give you a great advantage when starting college. My first year in school was much easier because I was part of the EOF program. Every person you meet on-campus can be part of your ladder to success.

-Tamanna Murshed, 2012 STEM class of 2012 and Montclair State University graduate
How to Choose a College That's Right For You

While still being in high school, there are a few tips that you may need to know about choosing the college that is best for you. If you start judging the college without even getting to know about it, then stop and take a few minutes to really put your thought into each college around you or even one that suits your major because your future is on the line.

Start with a short list of colleges. If you think that there are not enough schools on your list, then add a few extra colleges that have your intended major. After creating the list, rank the schools from your first choice to last choice. You should have “reach” schools, schools that may be more difficult to get into and “safety” schools, schools where you are sure you will gain admittance. If you need help figuring this out, ask your guidance counselor.

Another important tip is do not procrastinate making your list of potential colleges. With over 5,300 colleges and universities in the US, it may seem overwhelming, but once you start to narrow down that list and focus on the types of schools that will work for you, that number will be significantly reduced.

Keep in mind the types of requirements you have to ensure a positive college experience. Do you want to live at home or commute? Would you prefer to live in a city or in a more rural area? Do you want a larger school where you can kind of disappear or a smaller school with a sense of community? Would you feel comfortable at a religious school?

Choosing the perfect school is very personal and it is something that you should spend a bit of time thinking about. There is no “right” answer, as everyone is looking for something different, so don’t be swayed by what your friends are choosing to do.

Finally, I suggest focusing on your endgame. What do you hope to gain from your college experience? Once your figure that out, start applying!

How to pick the college that is right for you

By Beyza Hasan and Petriece Koceva

Still confused about which college will be the best fit for you? Check this video linked to your right and have your questions answered!

Student POV

I chose Montclair State University because I knew I wanted to stay close to home because I want to commute. They also had my intended major, biology. Another reason I chose to attend MSU is because they gave me a good financial aid package.

-Karielyz Ortiz, SET class of 2021
Do you hate not having time to study for a big exam that is due the next day? Do you feel like you never have time to get all of the things you NEED to get done completed? Do you feel like you never have time to do things you WANT to do? Finding a way to complete all of your tasks and have time for fun is as simple as managing your time wisely.

Managing your time is important in high school, but once you get to college, it is one of the most important skills you can have.

Time management doesn't require much effort, it’s just a matter of good planning and organization. Figure out how many hours a week you need to study and work on schoolwork and map out a schedule for yourself.

The main focus of time management is to stay motivated. It may be easy to blow off a block of time that you scheduled for study time, but you will make your life much more chaotic if you choose to go off schedule.

If you’re really feeling unmotivated, start with small steps. Set a timer for yourself and work for ten minutes. Smaller chunks of time feel more manageable.

According to Perdue University’s article “Time Management Tips for Busy College Students,” one strategy everyone should use is to schedule time for themselves. “Long study sessions or chunks of time working on assignments should be broken up with time away from screens or textbooks. You need to give your mind a rest.”

If you would like to read the complete list of Perdue’s time management tips, click here. There is no one-size-fits-all model for how to manage your time. You need to find strategies that work for you and try them out until you find one that works for you.

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**Student Voices**

I learned how to manage my time properly this year. I got a big planner and fill it out at the beginning of every week with all of the things I have to do. I also write on my mirror with chalk pencils, so I have a constant reminder of what tasks I have to get done on a daily basis.

-Nurjahan Jhorna, STEM class of 2021

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**Time Management Tips**

- Set realistic goals
- Prioritize wisely
- Set time limits
- Take breaks between tasks
- Organize your time

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Watch “Inside the mind of a master procrastinator,” a Ted Talk by Tim Urban about finding strategies to manage your time.

“How I Manage My Time - 10 Time Management Tips,” an informative video about time management.
According to a 2018 study done by the American Psychological Association, one in three first-year college students suffer from mental health issues... And those are pre-pandemic numbers! Taking care of your mental health, regardless of your stage in life, is very important and become even more important during this time of the coronavirus.

When the pandemic first started happening, we were all isolated in our homes and it affected many lives around the world. Many people became depressed. Even the best students found it difficult to stay motivated.

College is a stressful transition and it has become even more stressful with all of the changes that the world has undergone in the past year and a half. This makes it so important to be aware of your mental health and to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure you stay healthy.

Sitting in front of a computer screen almost every day all day can get to us, add to that the onslaught of assignments that came with online school and everyone is bound to get stressed out. This is why it is important to do your best to create a balance between things that you have to do and things that you want to do.

According to the article “Managing Stress” on Campusmindworks.org, “Many students find that they need to develop new skills in order to balance academic demands with a healthy lifestyle.”

The article goes on to say that students can proactively reduce stress by gaining other skills. “Many students find that they can reduce their level of academic stress by improving skills such as time management, stress management, and relaxation.”

The most important thing when dealing with mental health is to practice mindfulness. This will help you stay attuned to what you are thinking and feeling. According to mindful.org, “Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we’re doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what’s going on around us.”

★ Exercising can make you feel good in many ways
★ Check in with yourself, make sure YOU are okay or if you aren’t okay do what it takes to be okay for YOU
★ Practice gratitude, think positive thoughts, it will slowly make everything better
★ Most importantly incorporate SELF CARE into your life, it can be anything that fits
★ Don’t ever be afraid to seek help if you need it
★ Get enough sleep

“Student Perspective

“I deal with stress differently every time, it depends on the situation. Sometimes I listen to music while clearing my thoughts, there are times I will tear up. Usually, I’ll just push it to the back of my head and deal with it silently.”

- Jarin Choudhury, STEM 2022
2021-2022
Turning the impossible to I’M POSSIBLE!