



Selective College Admissions

Five Important Tips

Webinar: August 31, 2020

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 – to focus on **going** to a college that is a good match, not to 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.

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	42.4%	8.7%	70.3%	4.9
New York University	27.8%	13.8%	67.0%	2.0
Davidson College	48.7%	13.9%	65.8%	3.5
Colby College	43.4%	7.6%	64.6%	5.7
Middlebury College	44.8%	12.6%	61.5%	3.5
Franklin and Marshall College	68.6%	28.0%	60.8%	2.4
Claremont McKenna College	28.2%	8.0%	59.5%	3.5
Colorado College	27.2%	11.6%	59.1%	2.3
Pitzer College	33.8%	11.3%	58.7%	3.0
Haverford College	43.1%	13.5%	56.2%	3.2
Colgate University	46.4%	20.1%	55.6%	2.3
Northwestern University	24.9%	7.1%	54.6%	3.5

A few national statistics (reality check!)

- Enrollment in US colleges and universities

Total undergraduate	16,623,932
Total graduate	3,050,782
Public 4-year institutions	8,986,071
Public 2-year institutions	5,546,704
Private 4-year institutions	4,108,626
For-profit, 4-year institutions	834,552

Enrollment at Minnesota colleges and universities

Total undergraduate	293,289
Total graduate	115,494
Public 4-year institutions	128,746
Public 2-year institutions	116,418
Private 4-year institutions	71,084
For-profit 4-year institutions	92,204

Almanac Issue, August 2020 Chronicle of Higher Education

Other key data points:

- 6-year graduation rate (in USA) at 4-year institutions 61.8%
- 6-year graduation rate in Minnesota 66.5%
- Percent of first-year students who attend college within their home state 80.2%
- Percent of students who applied to five or fewer colleges/universities 65.6%
- Percent of students who are attending their first or second choice college 86.1%

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>

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
4. Examine closely the early decision/early action options to determine your best strategy/fit
5. Take special care with the “why us?” essay, or the “what would you add to the Class of 2025?” 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 virtual visits by college admission reps – 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 Cassie Klein Conor Maher Stephanie McClendon Kendra Olson Jennifer Stout Christina Taylor 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:

1. Submit each completed application directly to the college.
2. 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.

- 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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