“Greatness is not in where we stand, but in what direction we are moving. We must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it – but sail we must and not drift nor lie at anchor.”

- Oliver Wendell Holmes
INTRODUCTION

This Senior Planning Guide has been designed by the Alexandria Area High School College and Career Center Counselors to assist AAHS seniors and their parents/guardians in the post high school planning process. There are numerous options to choose from, and **knowing yourself well is the key to making appropriate choices**. Therefore, throughout this guide, you will find not only the answers to many of your questions regarding post high school planning, but also tools that will help you gain further insight into what path after high school is best for you. Also, keep in mind the work you have done in AAA in the past, which provided you with ideas for future careers, educational paths and information regarding your abilities and interests. Consider what you have learned about yourself in your classes, high school activities, jobs, etc. From experiences like these, you have gained knowledge regarding your strengths and weaknesses, as well as your likes and dislikes. All of this valuable data about yourself will help you make appropriate choices for your future.

Senior Year is the year of “ACTION” and your School Counselor is prepared to help you in this process. Although your counselor cannot make any decisions for you, we can help you find more information, answer your questions and assist you in sorting through your options. The planning process can seem overwhelming; however, people are available to assist you along the way – please utilize the support that’s here for you!

AAHS School Counselors:

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Engineering, Manufacturing Technologies & Natural Resources Academy Counselor  
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**Carrie Urness**  
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curness@alexschools.org
**SENIOR YEAR COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR**

**September - November**
- Update your digital portfolio with your academic, athletic and work activities as well as other achievements. Prepare a portfolio if you're interested in the arts or audition if you're interested in music.
- Call college admissions offices or look online for open house dates and scheduled tours.
- **Arrange campus visits** to those schools that interest you. It's okay to go more than once!
  - Customize your visits beyond the generic campus tour by making individual appointments with departments that align with your interests (majors, activities, etc.).
- Meet with your school counselor to review your current high school and future post-secondary plans.
- Meet with college admissions representatives during their visit to AAHS. Stop into the College and Career Center for more information.
- **Take or retake the ACT and/or SAT** in the fall if needed. To register go to [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).
- Select the schools to which you will apply. Make a list of deadlines for each school.
- **Begin applying to schools on your list and aim to have your applications submitted by early November.**
- **Federal Financial Aid:** Apply for a [FSA ID](https://fsaid.ed.gov/) by going to [https://fsaid.ed.gov/](https://fsaid.ed.gov/).
- **Apply for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** ([https://fafsa.ed.gov/](https://fafsa.ed.gov/)) as soon as possible after October 1st.
- Ask for recommendations (if required) from teachers, counselors and others who can comment on your abilities and talents.
- Athletes: Submit your transcript and register with the NCAA Eligibility Center
- Check scholarship opportunities posted on the AAHS College and Career Center webpage [Scholarship Page](https://www.scholarshippage.com). Be aware of deadlines for competitive scholarships
- Begin learning more about financial aid options.
- Check if there is still time to sign up for spring classes that will earn college credit.
- Secure housing – the earlier you apply and are accepted, the higher you’ll be on the priority list for housing options.

**December - February**
- Apply for scholarships offered by the colleges to which you have applied. Look on college websites and check with financial aid offices/admissions for additional opportunities.
- Keep checking scholarship options on the AAHS College and Career website

**March – Early June**
- Keep working hard! Senior year grades count!
- Notify colleges of your decision to attend or not attend. Note: the national candidate reply date is May 1.
- Send in any required forms or deposits.
- Athletes: Complete NCAA requirements. It’s important to plan well in advance or you may not qualify.
- Request that your final transcript and verification of graduation be sent to the college you plan to attend (this will be done through [Parchment](https://www.parchment.com)).
- Attend Graduation Practice (required), Honors night if you’re invited and Baccalaureate if you choose.
- Graduate!
Summer

- Get a job to earn money for college.
- Review orientation materials from the college you selected.
- If living on campus, check with the college for a list of what's provided by the school and what the school expects the student to provide.
- Contact your roommate.

NOTES:

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CHOOSING A CAREER PATH

Career Inventories: Taking a career inventory can be a great way to begin exploring careers. Inventories often ask you questions about your interests, preferences, and values. They may also ask about your abilities and talents, and even attempt to measure some of your skills. Free career inventories can be found on Minnesota Career Information Systems (MCIS). Some of the assessments you may want to refer to are: Career Clusters Inventory, Interest Profiler, Interest Profiler Short Form, Occupation Sort, Skills Assessment, and Work Importance Locator. Some other tools you may want to check out are: Learning Styles Survey, Reality Check, and the Assessment links. After you have taken several inventories, you can run a combined report of assessments to see common themes from your results.

To use MCIS go to: mncis.intocareers.org

● All AAHS students have an individual username and password for MCIS.
  ○ Username: school district email address (________@alexschools.org)
  ○ Password: students set their own password. If it is a student’s first time logging in, the default password is password4U.
    ■ If a student is having trouble logging in, just click on “Forgot username or password” and follow the prompts.

Career Fairs: Attend a school-sponsored career fair as well as fairs in the community to talk with various professionals in various careers. Talk with professionals and pick up brochures and other valuable information at the fairs.

Education Fairs: Attend a Minnesota Education Fair (MEF). This is a great opportunity to talk with many different college representatives and learn about the college admissions and financial aid process!

Informational Interviews: You may be interested in several careers. One of the challenges of exploring careers is that the descriptions you read on the internet or the impression you have in your mind might not match what the career is like in real life. Consider scheduling some interviews with people who have jobs that you find interesting.

Job Shadowing: Another helpful way to see what certain jobs are really like is to do a job shadow. As the term implies, you find a person who would be willing to let you follow along while he or she works. Typically this is done for a half-day or full-day.

Volunteering: Volunteering may help you gain experience that you would otherwise not be able to get. This may also spark a passion in a field that you hadn’t considered before. Contact your local United Way or businesses to inquire what volunteer opportunities may be available.

Contact your School Counselor: Make an appointment to talk with your School Counselor to get more information and support on choosing a career path.
5 Steps to Success in College

1. **Understand why you are going to college** - What do you want to be doing 10 years from now? Do you need college to get to this desired place? Pay close attention to your area of interest. Does it require a two or four year college?

2. **Pick a college for your major** - Most colleges should have many disciplines that fit your area of interest or compliment your area of study.

3. **Talk to people in the field** - Find out everything you can about your field of interest by talking to people in the field, students studying this field, professors, internships, etc.

4. **Shadow someone in the field** - If possible, find someone who makes a living doing what you might want to do. Does this still fit what you want to do?

5. **Placement** - What’s the percentage of job placement of college graduates from a particular college or your college major/career choice.

**Self Evaluation**

- What do I want most out of life?
- What kind of career could I get excited about?
- What kind of career will keep me motivated, interested and improving?
- What skills do I need to get there?
- What have I done or seen in this area that has interested me?

**Choosing the Right College (things to consider)**

- Career Goal (College Major)
- Geographic Location
- Campus Setting
- Two Year or Two-plus (community college to four year college) or Four Year College
- Sports
- Study Abroad
- Student Support Services (IEP or 504)
- ROTC
- Student Activities/Programs (Drama, Theater, Choir, Band, etc.)
The School Visit

This can be a scheduled formal visit or an informal impromptu visit. Many college’s have you set up a visit online. Scheduling a visit online is typically found under “Admissions”. Below are things to do on your campus visit.

**Campus Drive** - Drive around the campus. How long would it take you to get to your classes? Will you walk or take a bus?

**Community Search** - What is the community like? Is it safe? You will likely get a gut feeling on this one.

**Academic Buildings/Student Support Services** - Where will you spend most of your academic life? What resources are available to you in these buildings. Is there a job placement service? Are student support services provided (on-campus counseling or clinic)? Is tutoring available? Will my credits transfer?

**Campus Life** - What co-curricular activities does the college offer (sports, clubs, intramurals, recreational activities, fine arts, etc.).

**The Dorms/Student Housing** - visit a dorm room if you can. Are they clean, can you pick a roommate & how much “stuff” will you have room for?

**The Social Atmosphere** - get a feel for social experiences that are provided on campus. What types of student activities are available? What does the community have to offer? Will you be able to find things you enjoy?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Name</th>
<th>Institution Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Name of city/state</td>
<td>● Name of city/state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Distance from home</td>
<td>● Distance from home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Number of Students</td>
<td>● Number of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Physical size of campus</td>
<td>● Physical size of campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Type of school (2 or 4 year)</td>
<td>● Type of school (2 or 4 year)</td>
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<tr>
<td>● School setting (rural, urban)</td>
<td>● School setting (rural, urban)</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Location/size of nearest city</td>
<td>● Location/size of nearest city</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Co-ed, male, female</td>
<td>● Co-ed, male, female</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Religious affiliation</td>
<td>● Religious affiliation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admission Requirements</td>
<td>Admission Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Deadline</td>
<td>● Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Tests required</td>
<td>● Tests required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Avg. test scores, GPA, rank</td>
<td>● Avg. test scores, GPA, rank</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Special requirements</td>
<td>● Special requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Notification process</td>
<td>● Notification process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Is your major offered?</td>
<td>● Is your major offered?</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Special requirements</td>
<td>● Special requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Accreditation</td>
<td>● Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Student-faculty ratio</td>
<td>● Student-faculty ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Typical class size</td>
<td>● Typical class size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>Expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Tuition, room and board</td>
<td>● Tuition, room and board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Estimated total budget</td>
<td>● Estimated total budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Application fee, deposits</td>
<td>● Application fee, deposits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Deadline</td>
<td>● Deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Required forms</td>
<td>● Required forms</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Percentage receiving aid</td>
<td>● Percentage receiving aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Scholarships</td>
<td>● Scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Residence hall requirement</td>
<td>● Residence hall requirement</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Availability</td>
<td>● Availability</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Types and sizes</td>
<td>● Types and sizes</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Food plan</td>
<td>● Food plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>Facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Academic</td>
<td>● Academic</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Recreational</td>
<td>● Recreational</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Other</td>
<td>● Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Clubs, organizations</td>
<td>● Clubs, organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Athletics, intramural</td>
<td>● Athletics, intramural</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Greek life</td>
<td>● Greek life</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Other</td>
<td>● Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus Visits</td>
<td>Campus Visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● When</td>
<td>● When</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What You'll Need to Apply to College

Once you've selected several schools that interest you, go to their websites and find the “Apply Now” button.

- Fill out and submit your college applications carefully, following online instructions.
- Wait two to six weeks for a response from each college. Make sure you check your email for next steps.
- Follow up with a phone call to the admissions office if you’re not hearing anything or have questions about your application.

When you apply for admission to a college, you will need to pull a lot of pieces together:

**High School Transcript**: Most colleges will require a copy of your high school transcript. You can request this be sent to the college(s) you are interested in by going on the AAHS College and Career website (see instructions under “Requesting High School Transcripts” later in this packet).

**Application Fee**: You might have to pay an application fee (anywhere from $20-$75). A fee waiver may be available for qualifying students. Talk to an admissions counselor at the college to which you are applying. You may be able to get the fee waived.

**College Admissions Tests**: Most four-year colleges or universities require you to submit **ACT or SAT scores**. If you apply to a school with open enrollment, you may not need to take the ACT or SAT. Make sure you know test dates, times and locations. Talk with your school counselor about how to sign up for the test.

**Letters of Recommendation**: Four-year colleges or universities may require letters of recommendation. These recommendations are about what you've accomplished, what kind of potential you have, and why the person writing the letter believes you should be admitted to that college. Recommendation can come from your teachers, coaches, mentors, church leaders, employers and people you've worked with in your community. Recommendation cannot come from relatives.

**Application Essay**: If you plan on attending a four-year college or university, you may have to write an application essay. This essay is a way to let a college know the real you. If the essay topic isn't provided, you can choose your own topic. Write something that you know about & give examples that can help bring your topic to life. Write in your own voice.

**Interview**: If the school is very selective with its admissions process, you may have to schedule an interview. The best interview tip is to relax and be yourself.
REQUESTING HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPTS

Sending High School Transcripts - Students will send their high school transcripts through Parchment. To send a transcript, go to:

- [www.alexschools.org](http://www.alexschools.org)
- Under "Select a School", Click on "Alexandria Area High School", hover over the "College and Career Center", and Click "Request Transcripts".
- Click on "Parchment" to create an account.
- Click on "Learners and Parents". Click on "Sign up" under "Don't have an account".
- Make sure you use your @alexschools.org email so you can 5 transcripts for free.
- You will receive an access code from your school email, which you'll use to finalize your account.
- On the next screen, click on the blue plus (+) sign to add Alexandria Area High School.
- Indicate years in attendance and highest grade of education.
- Waive your privacy rights so your school can send your transcript, and sign.
- The next screen will have a green order button. Click on that button to search for your college and send scores.

TRANSFERRING COLLEGE CREDITS/SENDING COLLEGE TRANSCRIPTS

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT CLASSES:
Concurrent Enrollment courses or Dual Enrollment courses are classes taken in the high school and are taught by high school teachers. These classes provide students with an opportunity to earn both high school and college credits while in high school. Grades earned are part of a student’s permanent high school and college transcript.

WILL MY CREDITS TRANSFER?
For planning purposes regarding whether concurrent enrollment courses at AAHS through ATCC, SCSU, CLC, RCC, and/or SMSU might transfer to your “end” college of interest, students are encouraged to contact the transfer personnel at their “end” college of interest, refer to the transfer information on that college's website, and/or use the Transferology website--[https://www.transferology.com](https://www.transferology.com). It is always up to the “receiving” college whether or not coursework and credits will transfer and in what capacity they will transfer. See the “AAHS Concurrent Enrollment Course Information” page for details on course numbers, number of credits offered, and through which college each class is offered.

HOW DO I SEND MY COLLEGE TRANSCRIPTS?
You can request official transcripts from ATCC, SCSU, and SMSU to be sent to your "end" college by going to [www.getmytranscript.org](http://www.getmytranscript.org).
**COLLEGE CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES AT AAHS: Concurrent**

**CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT**

Concurrent Enrollment courses are college courses taken at AAHS, by AAHS teachers, through a partnering college. The letter grade students earn will be on both their high school and college transcript.

**AAHS Concurrent Enrollment Courses:**

Highlight the courses that you have taken while attending AAHS. This can be used when meeting with your college advisor to make sure what you've taken has transferred.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School Course (and Qualifier)</th>
<th>College Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Sign Language I (Ap)</td>
<td>ASL 1400 American Sign Language 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP English Literature &amp; Composition (Sm)</td>
<td>LIT 120 Introduction to Literature 3 Credits SMSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS College Intro to Education &amp; Lab (Sm)</td>
<td>ED 101 Introduction to Education &amp; Lab 3 Credits SMSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS College Principles of Marketing (Ap)</td>
<td>MKTG 2525 Principles of Marketing 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS Composition I (Af) / Literature</td>
<td>ENGL 1410 Composition I 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS Composition I / Literature (Am)</td>
<td>ENGL 2405 Modern American Literature 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS US History to 1877 (Ap)</td>
<td>HIST 1401 US History to 1877 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS US Hist 1877 to Present (Ap)</td>
<td>HIST 1402 US History, 1877 to Present 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Algebra (Sm)</td>
<td>Mathematics 110 College Algebra 3 Credits SMSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College American Government (Sm)</td>
<td>Political Science 120 American National Government 3 Credits SMSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Composition I (Af)</td>
<td>ENGL 1410 Composition I 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Composition I online (Af)</td>
<td>ENGL 1410 Composition I 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Composition II (Af)</td>
<td>ENGL 1420 Composition II 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Composition II online (AF)</td>
<td>ENGL 1420 Composition II 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Intro to Computers (Ap)</td>
<td>ITEC 1430 Intro to Computers 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College General Psychology (Am)</td>
<td>PSYC 1445 General Psychology 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Macroeconomics (Sm)</td>
<td>Economics 202 Principles of Macroeconomics 3 Credits SMSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Physics (Sm)</td>
<td>Physics 120 Introductory Physics 3 Credits SMSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Physics Lab (Sm)</td>
<td>Physics 120L Introductory Physics Lab 1 Credit SMSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Public Speaking (Ap)</td>
<td>COMM 1415 Public Speaking 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College US History to 1877 online (Ap)</td>
<td>HIST 1401 US History to 1877 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College US History, 1877 to Present online (Ap)</td>
<td>HIST 1402 US History, 1877 to Present 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert Choir (Clc)</td>
<td>MUSC 1431 Concert Choir 2 Credits CLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French 102 (Sc)</td>
<td>French 102 Beginning French II 4 Credits SCSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French 201 (Sc)</td>
<td>French 201 Intermediate French I 4 Credits SCSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nrs Assist/Hlth Aide (Ap)</td>
<td>PNSG 1640 Nursing Assistant/Home Health Aide 3 Credits ATCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinfonia Orchestra (Clc)</td>
<td>MUSC 1420 College String Orchestra 2 Credits CLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish 201 (Sm)</td>
<td>Spanish 201 Intermediate Spanish I 4 Credits SCSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish 202 (Sm)</td>
<td>Spanish 202 Intermediate Spanish II 4 Credits SCSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind Ensemble (Clc)</td>
<td>MUSC 1408 College Wind Symphony 2 Credits CLC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) COURSES
AP Courses are taught in a high school setting with high school teachers who follow course guidelines developed and published by the College Board. Courses use college-level textbooks and teach students how to read and write at the college level. At the conclusion of an AP course, students have the opportunity to take the corresponding national AP exam in May.

AAHS AP Courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advanced Placement (AP)</th>
<th>AAHS College Credit Courses</th>
<th>College Credit may be Earned in the Following ways:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP English Literature &amp; Comp.</td>
<td>AP Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP World History: Modern</td>
<td>AP Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP US History</td>
<td>AP Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP Calculus</td>
<td>AP Music Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP Human Geography</td>
<td>AP Studio Art</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOW DO I EARN COLLEGE CREDIT THROUGH AP COURSES?
The “end” college (receiving college) determines what score you’ll need to earn on each AP Exam to earn college credit.

How do I know if the college I want to attend issues credit by exam?
https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/getting-credit-placement/search-policies

For complete information, visit the College Board Website at: https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/

CLEP COURSES:
CLEP exams let you test out of introductory courses and move to more advanced courses sooner, saving time toward your degree.

AAHS Classes that might align with a CLEP Test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Level Exam Program (CLEP)</th>
<th>AAHS Course</th>
<th>Suggested CLEP Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students successfully completing this AAHS coursework may want to take a related CLEP exam for possible college credit. Find out if colleges you're interested in accept CLEP at <a href="http://clep.collegeboard.org">http://clep.collegeboard.org</a></td>
<td>AP English Literature/Composition</td>
<td>Analyzing &amp; Interpreting Literature, College Composition, College Composition Modular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP US History</td>
<td>History of the US I, History of the US II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Algebra</td>
<td>AP Calculus (one or both semesters)</td>
<td>College Algebra, College Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors Advanced Algebra</td>
<td>AP Biology</td>
<td>College Algebra, College Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP Calculus</td>
<td>AP Chemistry</td>
<td>Calculus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP Studio Art</td>
<td>Accounting II</td>
<td>Biology</td>
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<td>PreCalculus</td>
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<td>Financial Accounting</td>
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<td>Precalculus</td>
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</tbody>
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How do I know if the college I want to attend issues credit by exam?
https://clep.collegeboard.org/clep-college-credit-policy-search
COMPLETING THE FAFSA

PREPARING FOR THE FAFSA®

The FAFSA process is quicker and easier when you have a username and password called an FSA ID. (If your parent is providing information on your FAFSA, he or she will need his or her own FSA ID as well.) Learn more about the FSA ID and how to create yours at StudentAid.gov/fsaid.

GATHER THIS INFORMATION
The FAFSA asks questions about you and your finances, so have the information below handy.

- Social Security number
- Alien registration number
- Federal tax information or tax returns
- Records of untaxed income
- Cash, savings, and checking account balances
- Investments other than cash in which you live

DON’T HAVE ALL YOUR INFO READY YET?
That’s okay; you can start the FAFSA, save it, and come back later to finish it. (To find out whether you need to report info about your parents, visit StudentAid.gov/dependency.)

FILLING OUT THE FAFSA®

Each October, the FAFSA is available for the next school year. It’s important to fill it out as soon as possible to meet school and state financial aid deadlines.

SUBMISSION OPTIONS
- Electronic form (fill out at fafsa.gov)
- Mail-in application (download PDF at fafsa.gov or request a printed PDF by calling us at 1-800-433-3243)
- Electronic submission by your college or career school (ask if they can submit the FAFSA for you)

MEETING FINANCIAL AID DEADLINES
Each state and school has its own FAFSA deadline. Check a college’s or career school’s deadline on its website or by calling its financial aid office. Most state deadlines are at fafsa.gov/deadlines.htm.

DID YOU KNOW?
You may be able to retrieve and transfer tax information into the form automatically using the Internal Revenue Service Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT).
Additional Resources:

- Understanding Financial Aid Options: [https://studentaid.gov/h/understand-aid](https://studentaid.gov/h/understand-aid)
- Filing out the FAFSA: [https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out](https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out)
- FAFSA Application: [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov)

***STUDENTS: USE YOUR PERSONAL EMAIL ADDRESS! ***
FINANCIAL AID TERMINOLOGY

Cost of Attendance (COA): estimated total cost to attend a particular institution. This includes tuition, housing, meals, fees, books and supplies, transportation, and personal expenses.

Grant: Free money (you do not need to pay this back). Grants are typically need-based.

Scholarship: Free money that is typically earned based on merit. For some scholarships there are certain rules you need to fulfill to maintain scholarship eligibility (i.e. GPA requirements).

Work Study: a way for students to earn money to pay for school through part-time on (and sometimes off) campus jobs. The program gives students an opportunity to gain valuable work experience while pursuing a college degree. However, not every school participates in the Federal Work-Study Program. Other information:
- You receive a normal paycheck.
- You must find your own job.
- Income made with work study does not count against next year’s FAFSA filing.
- You can decide how much goes directly to your tuition costs/loans and what goes into your pocket.

Student Loan: Aid that must be repaid when you leave college (even if you don’t graduate). Subsidized and unsubsidized loans are federal student loans for eligible students to help cover the cost of higher education.
- **Subsidized Loan**: Direct Loans available to undergraduate students with financial need. Students do not need to pay interest on subsidized loans while in school (at least half time), during the first six months after leaving school (grace period), or during a period of deferment.
- **Unsubsidized Loan**: Direct Unsubsidized Loans are available to undergraduate and graduate students; there is no requirement to demonstrate financial need. You are responsible for paying the interest on a Direct Unsubsidized Loan during all periods.

EFC (Expected Family Contribution): This is an index number calculated by submitting the annual FAFSA filing and is used to determine how much financial aid you will receive from each college. An EFC is listed as a series of numbers. For example, If your financial aid report shows an expected family contribution of 00000, this means $0 or zero dollars you are expected to pay for college, which is great! You will be eligible for a lot of federal financial aid for college, but not all of it will be free.

Student Aid Report (SAR): Summarizes the FAFSA information, provides your EFC, and lists your potential aid eligibility. This guarantees you nothing, but it is what the colleges will use to determine your financial aid package.

Financial Aid Offer/Award/Package: This is provided to students directly from each school. This is based on the cost of attendance (COA) and SAR. Students can accept or decline any part of the award package. This can take 4+ weeks to generate, so make sure you fill out the FAFSA early!

Full-Time Student: This is typically a student enrolled in 12+ credits per semester.

Half-Time Student: This is typically a student enrolled in 6-11 credits per semester.

*A typical financial aid package will consist of the following:
- Grants &/or scholarships
- Federal Guaranteed Student Loan or Subsidized Stafford Loan
- College Work Study
- Parent Loan or Federal Plus Loan
Regardless of whether or not you apply for financial aid, you should consider applying for scholarships. Below are some starting points for exploring scholarship opportunities.

COLLEGE SPONSORED SCHOLARSHIPS:
Each college has a variety of college specific scholarships available for students. Some scholarships are considered “automatic scholarships”, which means that students will be considered automatically by using the information provided during the application for the admission process. These are often based on a student’s ACT and GPA. Schools also offer a variety of competitive merit and need based scholarships with which students have the opportunity to apply. Information on these scholarships can be found by going to the colleges’ financial aid websites. Also, check with specific departments for scholarships they may offer (majors, music, athletics, etc.).

LOCAL AND NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS:
Where to look?

AAHS:
- AAHS College & Career Center Webpage:
  1. Go to: https://www.alexschools.org/domain/62
  2. Hover your mouse over “College & Career Center” at the top of the page, and click on “Scholarships”.

Alexandria Dollars for Scholars (DFS)
- All seniors will be provided information on DFS through AAA in the spring. Earning a scholarship through DFS is one way to get invited to the Senior Honors Night.

National Scholarship Search Engines:
- FastWeb: www.fastweb.org
- Raise Me: www.raise.me
- MCIS Financial Aid Sort: www.mncis.intocareers.org
- College Tool Kit: www.collegetoolkit.com
- Cappex: https://www.cappex.com/scholarships
- College Board: www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search