



PASADENA EDUCATION NETWORK

The Right Fit College

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What's New in College Admission?

Your Presenter



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So.Much.Information.

We can't answer every question you have in one presentation! As we tell our clients, this is a long process with lots of nuances, twists and turns. It's a marathon, not a sprint.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have after this presentation

Please contact me at

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College: The Competitive Landscape

The BAD news

- 30 of the top 50 ranked colleges admit less than 30% of their applicants.
- The average admit rate at the top 15 ranked colleges is 6.8% and falling.
- NYU received over 100,000 applications this year (*6,200 seats in freshman class*)
- Tulane received over 45,000 applications this year (*1,900 seats in freshman class*)
- Harvard rejects 80% of the valedictorians who apply each year.
- Stanford rejects 70% of applicants with PERFECT test scores.
- Students who aim for **ONLY** top-ranked colleges frequently end up disappointed when decisions come out – *and feeling like they've disappointed their parents.*

College: The Competitive Landscape

The GOOD NEWS

- There are 2,200+ four-year colleges in the U.S.!!!
- 70% of colleges admit 65% of their applicants or more.
- More than 85% of four-year schools admit at least half their applicants
- There's a four-year college for every student who wants to attend one.

Finding the right FIT is more important than selectivity.

- If you start early, do your research and create the **right college list**, you can give your student a competitive edge in the admissions process *(and save yourself a boatload of money)*.
- The goal of a thorough college search is to find the college environment where your child will fit academically, socially and emotionally.
- Look for colleges where they'll be **HAPPY and SUCCESSFUL**.

Here's what we'll discuss

-
- What do colleges consider in the admissions process?
 - What can we be doing now to present a strong application?
 - What does “fit” really mean?
 - What are some of the stress points in the college admission process, and how can we avoid them?

What Do Colleges Consider?

- *Grades*
- *Course Load Rigor*
- *GPA/rank*


These are **objective** measures of academic accomplishment.

- *Teacher/Counselor Recommendations*
- *Essay(s)*
- *Leadership / Extra-Curricular Activities*
- *Demonstrated Interest (some consider, some do not!)*
- *Specific needs of each school (“Institutional Priorities”), which fluctuate (might need a trombone player or a soccer goalie one year, but won’t need them the following year)*

These show colleges your character traits and contributions to communities you identify with

[Source: NACAC SOCA 2023](#)

This is something over which you have no control.



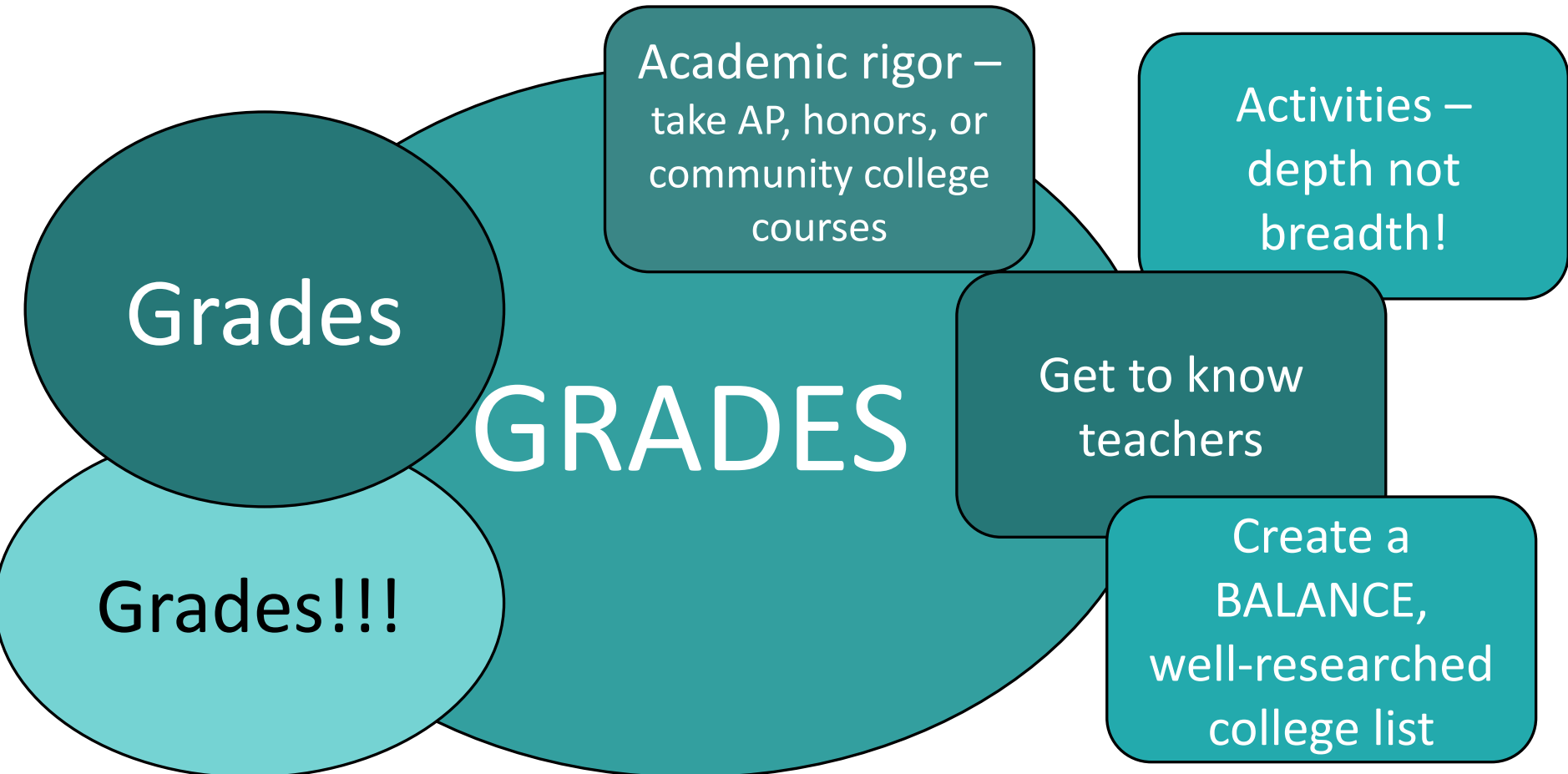
What Does “Holistic” Mean?

- Colleges look at you in context of what’s offered at your high school, and your personal circumstances
- More than just grades and test scores
- Colleges look at recommendations, activities, essay, interviews, leadership and other life experiences
- No “cut-off” for admission
 - *No one is EITHER admitted OR denied based solely on grades or scores*

HOWEVER

You won’t be a strong candidate for a college whose middle 50% GPA is far above yours. Stupendous essay, extra-curricular achievement or recommendation letter will not overcome grades or test scores that are lower than a college’s typical range.

What Should We Be Doing Now?



The “school profile” gives colleges context for each student’s transcript.

Four of the Core

Colleges want to see four years of each of these subjects:

- English
- Foreign Language
- History/social science
- Science
- Math

Meeting the minimum requirements for high school graduation, or college entrance, does not necessarily make you **COMPETITIVE** for selective college admission

Go Deep - In Academics and Extra-Curriculars



College Admission officers admit students who will contribute to their campus community.

Specifically:

Strong academic performance

Deep investigation into one or more academic areas/intellectual rigor - going beyond what is offered

Long-term commitment to one or two specific activities

extra-curricular leadership

What Does College Fit Mean?

- College has the **major** you are thinking about the most (*and a few other majors that you are interested in, just in case you change your mind!*).
- College has a few **clubs, sports or organizations** you would likely join.
- College is the **size** that is comfortable to you:
 - Small: <4,000 students – like Occidental, Trinity (CT), Lewis & Clark, Kenyon
 - Medium: 5,000-12,000 students – like LMU, Gonzaga, Trinity (TX), Butler
 - Large: >12,000 students – like USC, Syracuse, Wash U, Northeastern
 - Extra-large: >30,000 students – like UCLA, Arizona State, UMass, UMaryland
- College is in the environment that works for you – *snow, rain, far from home, close to home, college town, big/medium/small city, middle of nowhere, diversity, etc.*

College Fit – Part 2

- You (*student, not parent*) have visited OR researched thoroughly online
- You (*student, not parent*) have spoken to students who attend and talked with them about their experience at the school
- You (*student, not parent*) can name five things you LOVE about this school that do not include the schools ranking, sports record or location
(p.s. it's likely you will have to write an essay about this!)
- **Your grades and test scores are within, or above, the college's middle 50% of admitted students for the past several years.**

AVOIDABLE Stress Points



Testing



“Prestige”



Cost

Test Stress

Test-optional = college will consider scores if you submit them, but they are **ONLY ONE DATA POINT** in a much larger consideration.

Test-blind (or test-free) = college **WILL NOT CONSIDER** test scores.

UC and CSU systems are both permanently test-blind.

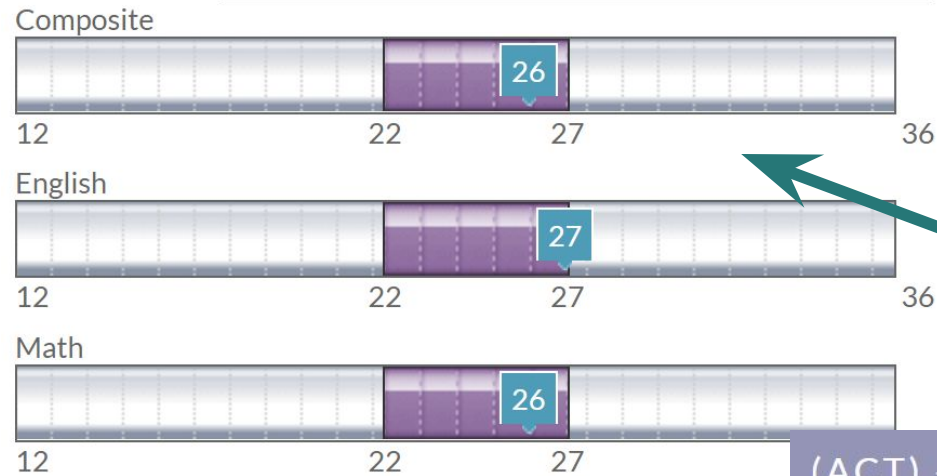
Test-Flexible = college is signaling that they would prefer to see scores - can be SAT/ACT or AP



If your child has testing anxiety, there are so many colleges that do not require SAT or ACT scores that you could build an entire list of fabulous colleges and not have to take either exam.

(ACT) Sebastian's - How do I match up?

Display Sebastian's scores from 06/11/2016 ▾




Sebastian is a much stronger candidate in this pool than in this one...

(ACT) - How do I match up?

My ACT scores from 02/06/2016 ▾



Score are based on full-time enrolled students

 = 50% Range

...but in today's admission environment, we may have the option to NOT submit this score.

Stressing About “Prestige”

I’ve never heard of it

≠

It must not be good.



***IT’S IMPORTANT TO
START HERE!***

[Harvard Law School Entering Class of 2023 - undergraduate institutions
Where CEO’s of 100 most-recognizable US companies attended College](#)

Balance is KEY

Balanced List

- Handful (2-3) of “reach” schools
any college that admits <25% of their applicant pool is a “reach” for EVERYONE
- Handful (3-4) of “target” schools
admits between 35-60% of applicants
- A few (2-3) “safe” or “likely” schools
where you are 100% sure you will get in

Some Resources to help you build a balanced list:

College Match, Steven R. Antonoff, Ph.D.

Colleges That Change Lives, Loren Pope

The Truth about College Admission, Brennan Barnard, and Rick Clark

“Why Do I
Need ‘Likely’
Schools on My
List?”

“I’ve Worked
So Hard.”

“I’m Smarter
Than That!”



IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU APPLY TO 2 COLLEGES OR 22.

IF THEY'RE ALL REACH SCHOOLS, YOU'RE GOING TO END UP WITH MORE REJECTIONS THAN ACCEPTANCES.

COLLEGES WITH ACCEPTANCE RATES OF LESS THAN 25% ARE REACH FOR EVERYONE.

THESE DAYS, COLLEGES HAVE ACCEPTANCE RATES IN THE SINGLE DIGITS, THESE ARE HIGHLY REJECTIVES, OR UNLIKELIES

AND IF YOU “FALL IN LOVE” WITH JUST ONE, OR CONSIDER JUST ONE “PERFECT,” YOUR CHILD WILL FEEL LIKE THEY HAVE DISAPPOINTED YOU IF THEY ARE NOT ADMITTED.

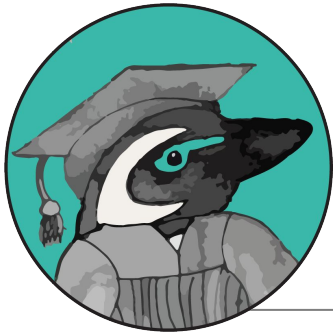
College Cost Stress

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) changed for the 2024-2025 school year. It opens each year for the senior class on **October 1**.

The FAFSA is the beginning of the process through which a government formula will calculate what it thinks you can afford to pay, **PER YEAR**, for your child's college education.

You can get an estimate of that number at the Federal Student Aid site for the US government, and search **SAI**

<https://studentaid.gov/help-center/answers/article/how-sai-calculated>



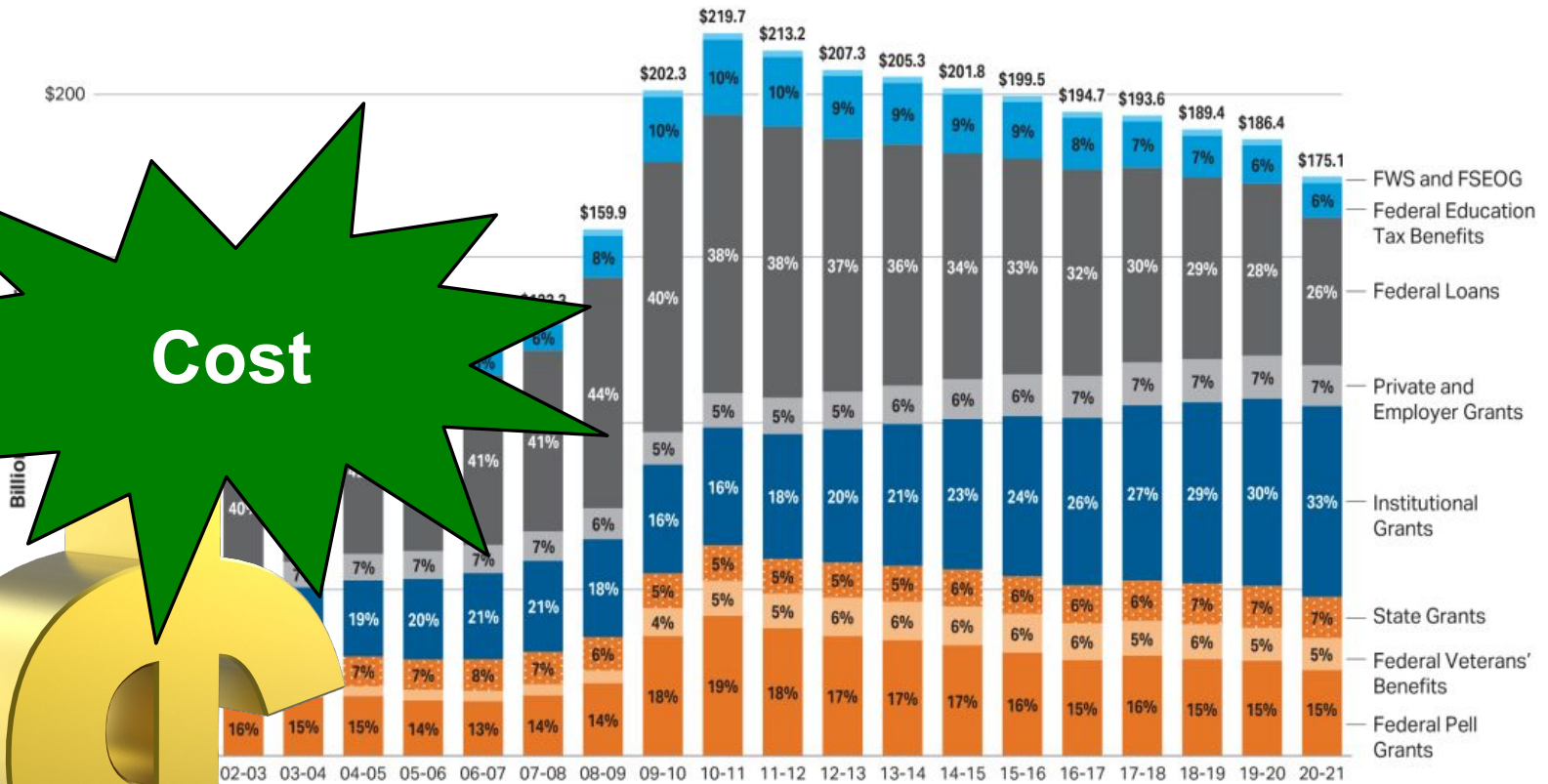
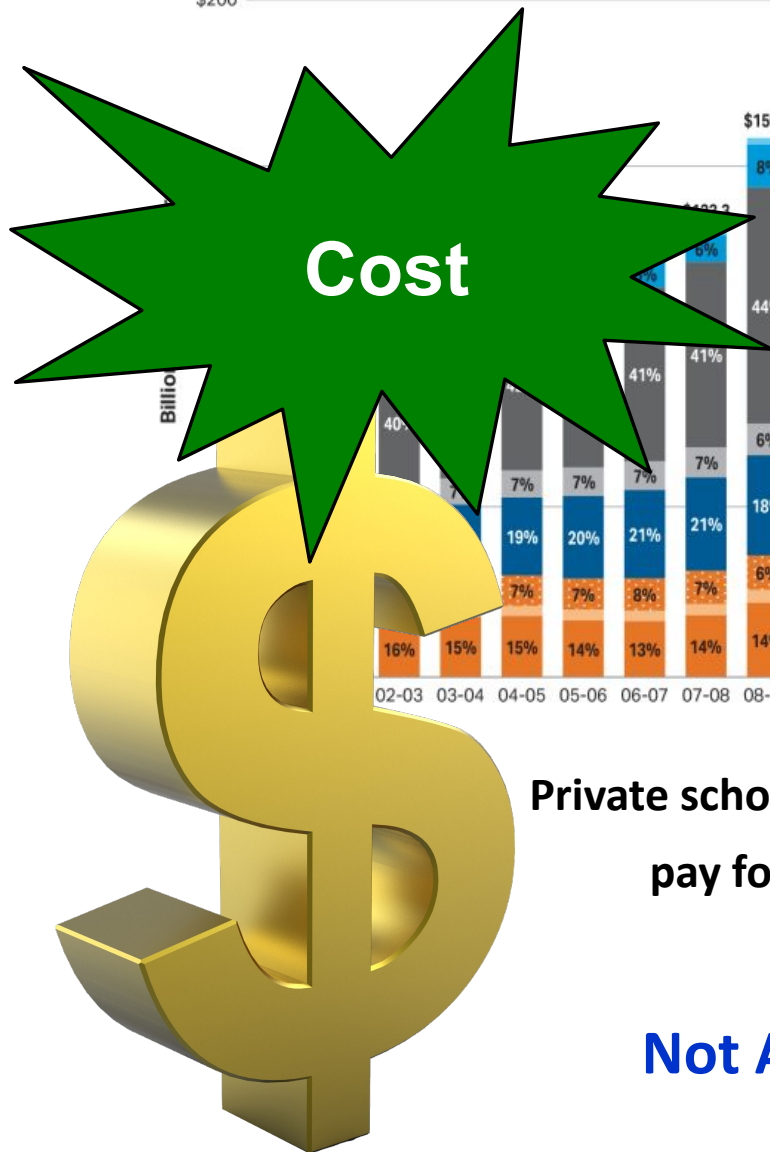
High SAI/ Low Need Families

If you think you won't qualify for need-based aid, focus on colleges that have a track record of giving merit-based scholarships. **Don't expect to get merit aid from colleges that don't have a track record of giving it.**

“Safe” schools where your grades/test scores are higher than their average, are more likely to give you merit scholarships!

Check each college's history of giving [here](#).

*There's money
in your college
list!*



Private scholarships makeup 7% of the money that helps students pay for college. Institutional grants make up 33%.

GO WHERE THE MONEY IS!

Not All Colleges Give Merit (FREE) Money

Stressing About Cost

Looking for Value?

Build a realistic college list keep cost in mind by using the [Net Price Calculator](#) to determine if the schools on your list is in your financial range

WUE is an option for California residents

RACC is another place for resources for information about out of state colleges

The [Cal States](#) and [UC's](#) are still the best deal going for california students

Starting at a community college and then transferring to either a state university or another 4 year institution can save money in the long run

Resources

- Who Gets In and Why, Jeffrey Selingo
- The Truth About College Admission, Brennan Barnard and Rick Clark
- College Match, A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School for You
Steven R. Antonoff
- Colleges That Change Lives, Loren Pope
- Fiske Guide to Colleges, Edward B. Fiske

**PLUS- look for the PEN College Planning and Resources
and Parent Pro Tips:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/11KbYTkqeK28fAXd2adjj7zLxW8teU5ozspYrn1HxCIY/edit?usp=sharing>

Before we let you go...

Please fill out the evaluation
(QR code below or link in the chat)
to help us customize future programs!



THANK YOU!

I am happy to answer any questions
you may have after this presentation
Please contact me

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