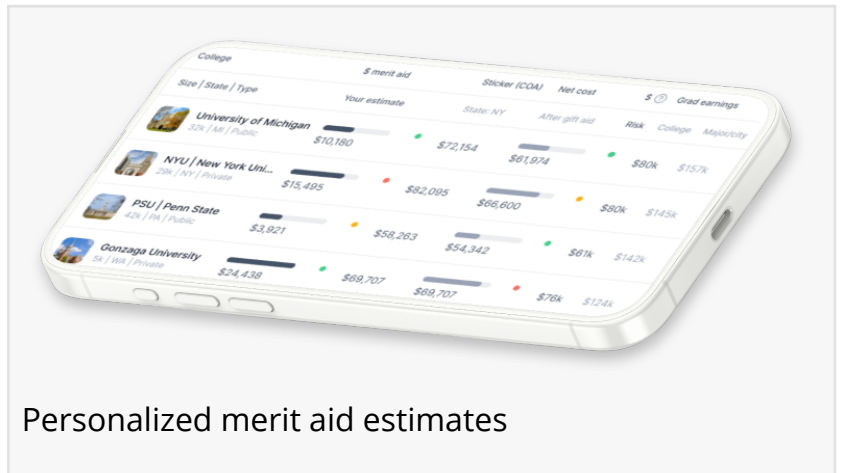


GradBetter Expands its College Cost Transparency Tools to High Schools

Merit insights, cost visibility and award comparison help high schools demystify financial aid for families.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Families want to know their true cost of college, but unfortunately, this visibility often comes at the end of the college admissions process. Too often, students work hard to get into their dream school only to find out it's beyond their family's finances or requires life-altering student loans.



Personalized merit aid estimates

Responsible shoppers do not test drive a Porsche when they're looking at a Volkswagen, Toyota or Ford. Families deserve the same transparency when searching for colleges that are the best fit for them financially as well as academically.

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Lee Bierer

[GradBetter](#) provides the desired insights into merit aid possibilities and its multi-student profiles enable cost visibility at the family level. The 2024 FAFSA changes from Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to Student Aid Index (SAI) eliminated the multi-student discount that assisted many families putting siblings through college. Families

can make a more informed decision when considering the timing and cost of each sibling's college choice within one comprehensive view.

Merit scholarships are based on academics and are available to families of all income levels. With GradBetter, high-achieving students can discover which colleges reward their academics and get personalized merit estimates based on what similar students have actually received. This along with need-based calculations can help families approximate their net cost and shop across colleges, just like they would for a car and avoid the April disappointment of not being able to

attend a student's dream school. GradBetter's Merit Insights tool helps eliminate the "bait and switch" remorse.

In addition to aggregating merit scholarships for marketing purposes, high school counselors can quickly learn which colleges are providing their students with the most merit scholarships and which ones are over or under-awarding their students relative to the national average.

GradBetter is excited to announce that Lee Bierer, a nationally recognized expert in college admissions and education, will be leading outreach to high school counselors. With over 18 years as the author of the popular "Countdown to College" column which appears weekly in High School Counselor and quarterly in The Link for Counselors, Lee understands the need for transparency. Lee's column has been syndicated by McClatchy Newspapers and Tribune News Services, and she has been a trusted source of insight and guidance for counselors, parents and students, Lee brings a deep understanding of what families are seeking. "Families want to dismantle the black box around merit-based financial aid, and GradBetter's tools help provide families that transparency."

According to a [NACUBO study](#), tuition discounts now exceed 50%, meaning most families pay less than half of the stated tuition rate. Understandably, families are looking for information about what level of discount they can expect from the colleges on their list. In addition, with more colleges linking scholarships to applying early, families need this visibility before, not during the college admission process.

Financial aid appeals are increasingly becoming part of the college admissions process. GradBetter provides seniors with [free award comparison](#) and appeal tools. According to statistics from Sallie Mae's "How America Pays for College," only 33% of families appealed but the majority won their appeal with most getting free money that does not need to be repaid. GradBetter helps students evaluate their appeal case and identify merit or need-based factors to highlight.

A well informed consumer benefits both the family and the college, and ultimately leads to the best outcome for the student. This shift in sentiment has taken place in the car buying process, why not college, where the sticker price can be much higher.

The time for transparency is now.

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