

How MSSM's Tailored College Counseling Secures Top College Acceptances & Scholarships

MSSM's personalized college counseling propels students to top colleges with one-on-one guidance, high scholarship awards, & a remarkable 100% acceptance rate.

LIMESTONE, ME, UNITED STATES, November 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM), a nationally recognized residential high school for gifted students, the college application process is more than just a series of tasks. It's a highly personalized journey designed to guide each student toward finding the college that best fits their individual goals and aspirations.

MSSM's College Counseling Office offers a tailored approach that enables students to apply to competitive colleges with confidence, often receiving substantial merit aid regardless of their family's income. With a 100% college acceptance rate and many students earning scholarships, MSSM's dedication to preparing juniors and seniors for their next steps is evident in every part of the process.

A Personalized Approach to College Counseling

One of the most significant advantages MSSM offers is its personalized college counseling service. The College Counselor, who works with about 30 students each year, is able to deeply understand each student's academic strengths, extracurricular achievements, and long-term goals. This level of individual attention allows the counselor to help students present themselves in the best possible light to colleges. Whether they are aiming for top STEM schools in the US, liberal arts colleges, or specialized programs, MSSM students benefit from having a trusted expert guiding them through each stage of the application process.



Ms. Erica Jortberg, MSSM's College Counselor, talks with a student about colleges.

Nina Dabas, an MSSM senior, highlights this personalized approach: "MSSM's College Counseling stands out due to the personalized attention each student receives. Even though our senior class is already small, less than 30 students, it is further divided into smaller sections. This allows us to have even more individualized sessions, including one-on-one meetings. What's more, beyond the dedicated college counselors, other teachers willingly assist with tasks like reading essays or sharing their own college experiences. For instance, a teacher who graduated from a college I'm considering offered invaluable insights into the application process and shared his personal experiences at that institution. It's an incredibly supportive environment for navigating college decisions."



Three seniors from the class of 2024 talk to juniors about their experiences with the process of applying to colleges.

This focus on personalized support extends beyond just the College Counselor. MSSM's small class size fosters strong relationships between students and faculty, who often go above and beyond to help students succeed. Whether they are reading college essays, providing advice based on their own experiences, or simply offering words of encouragement, MSSM teachers are deeply invested in their students' futures.

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Nina Dabas ('24)

Junior Seminar: Setting the Foundation

The college preparation process at MSSM begins during the spring of a student's junior year with the Junior Seminar. This course is specifically designed to familiarize

students with the resources and tools they will need when applying to colleges. It covers essential aspects of the college admissions process, such as researching schools, understanding admissions criteria, and beginning the Common Application, which is accepted by nearly 400 colleges across the nation.

The Junior Seminar places a particular emphasis on writing compelling and thoughtful admissions essays. Writing an essay that reflects a student's unique perspective is often one of the most challenging parts of the application process, but at MSSM, students receive plenty of

guidance and feedback to help them create a standout essay. This preparation allows students to enter their senior year with a solid understanding of the application process and the confidence to navigate it successfully.

In addition to working on their essays, students in the Junior Seminar also explore various college options. With over 4,000 colleges and universities in the United States, finding the right fit requires careful research and self-reflection. MSSM's goal is not to push students toward the most prestigious or well-known schools but to help them identify colleges where they will thrive both academically and personally.

Senior Seminar: Perfecting the Application

By the time students reach Senior Seminar, they are ready to finalize their college applications. The Senior Seminar is a hands-on course where students work closely with the College Counselor to ensure that every aspect of their application is polished and ready for submission. Whether it's refining their essays, preparing for interviews, or gathering letters of recommendation, seniors receive expert guidance every step of the way.

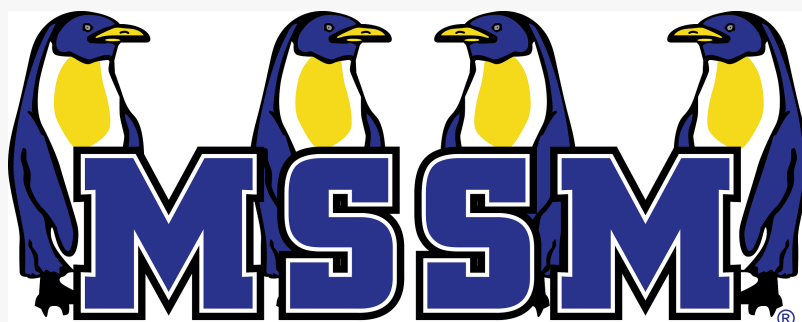
One of the unique aspects of MSSM's college counseling approach is the emphasis on finding a college that is the best fit for each student. This requires more than just looking at rankings or prestige; it involves helping students reflect on their personal goals, academic interests, and what they hope



A junior happily shows a college he researched for junior seminar.



The outside of Maine School of Science and Mathematics.



The MSSM Penguin Logo

to gain from their college experience. The College Counseling Office works closely with each student to create a list of schools that match their aspirations, ensuring that they apply to a range of institutions that offer the right environment for their continued growth.

MSSM's College Counseling Office also takes a proactive approach to securing merit aid. Many MSSM students receive significant merit-based scholarships, which are awarded based on academic performance, leadership, and other achievements rather than financial need. These scholarships can significantly reduce the cost of attendance, allowing students to attend colleges that might otherwise have been out of reach.

The PSAT and Early College Preparation

MSSM's commitment to preparing students for college begins long before they reach their junior or senior years. On PSAT Day, which is held in the fall for juniors, students in other grades also engage in activities that help set the foundation for future college applications.

Freshmen spend the day working on skits about self-advocacy, learning the importance of speaking up for themselves and communicating effectively—skills that will be essential when applying to college and beyond. Sophomores participate in a creative exercise where they design their own college, an activity that encourages them to start thinking about what they value in a college and what factors will influence their decision-making process.

Meanwhile, seniors use the time to focus on their college essays. Faculty members are available to read drafts, provide feedback, and offer guidance on how to make each essay as strong as possible. This collaborative atmosphere, where students and teachers work together to perfect application materials, reflects MSSM's broader approach to college counseling: one that is deeply supportive and personalized to each student's needs.

College Choices Reflect Individual Interests

At MSSM, the college application process is not a one-size-fits-all approach. The school takes pride in guiding students toward institutions that align with their academic interests and personal goals, rather than simply encouraging them to apply to the biggest or most prestigious schools. This individualized approach ensures that students end up at colleges where they will be happy, challenged, and successful.

MSSM graduates go on to attend a wide variety of colleges and universities, from top STEM schools in the US to liberal arts colleges and everything in between. Some of the institutions MSSM students have been accepted to include:

- Arizona State University-Tempe
- Bates College
- Boston University

- Bowdoin College
- Brown University
- Colby College
- Columbia University in the City of New York
- Dartmouth College
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
- Oberlin College
- Pomona College
- Rice University
- Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)
- Wellesley College
- Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI)

In addition to traditional college paths, some MSSM graduates choose to enter military service or attend military academies, while others may take a gap year to pursue other interests before starting college. This flexibility speaks to the self-directed nature of the college counseling process at MSSM, where students are encouraged to make decisions based on their own needs and goals rather than societal expectations.

Merit Aid and Scholarships

One of the many benefits of attending MSSM is the likelihood of receiving substantial merit aid. Because MSSM students are high achievers who excel in academics, leadership, and extracurricular activities, they are often strong candidates for merit-based scholarships. These scholarships are awarded based on a student's individual achievements and can significantly reduce the cost of attending college.

MSSM's College Counselor works closely with students and their families to identify schools where they have a high probability of receiving merit aid. This personalized guidance helps ensure that students can afford to attend colleges that are a good fit for them academically and personally. Whether it's a top STEM education boarding school or a smaller liberal arts college, MSSM graduates often enter college with the financial support they need to succeed.

The Importance of Community in College Counseling

The college counseling process at MSSM is not just about filling out applications or writing essays—it's about creating a supportive environment where students can explore their options, make informed decisions, and feel confident in their choices. The small class sizes and close-knit community at MSSM mean that students are surrounded by faculty and peers who are invested in their success.

In addition to one-on-one meetings with the College Counselor, MSSM students can turn to their

teachers for advice and support. Teachers frequently help with tasks like reading essays, providing feedback, or offering insights into specific colleges. This collaborative approach ensures that every student has the resources they need to succeed in the college admissions process.

Conclusion

MSSM's extensive and personalized approach to college counseling is one of the many reasons why it is considered one of the best STEM high schools in the nation. With a 100% college acceptance rate, a focus on helping students find the right fit, and a strong track record of securing merit-based scholarships, MSSM provides its students with the tools they need to succeed in the college admissions process. Whether they are applying to a top STEM school, a liberal arts college, or exploring other post-graduation paths like military service or a gap year, MSSM students have the support of a dedicated college counseling team and a community that is invested in their success.

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