

Advice from the Westborough High School Class 2014
Collected by the WHS Pathways After Graduation Survey

At the conclusion of their first year of college, students in the WHS Class of 2014 were asked: “Is there anything about the College Application Process that you would like to share with current WHS students who are going through the process?”

Here are some of their answers.

Starting Early

“The earlier you complete the work, the less stress you will have later in the fall.”

“Get things done early (application essay and any supplements) ...”

“Get your applications done at the beginning of the process to make it less stressful.”

“Get your applications started/finished early. Putting things off to the last minute will only cause trouble.”

“Get stuff done early. Fill out the apps early because you don’t want to worry too much trying to fill out apps while keeping your grades up.”

“Start it as soon as you can with the help of a parent or someone who understands the process because, there may be a few things that you may not understand how to fill out.”

“I would suggest that everyone start early and plan accordingly. That way, you aren’t stressed out within the last few weeks over the college application process. Start early and do a little each day.”

Deadlines

“Do not leave it until the last minute. Stay organized and on top of deadlines. Make lists if you have to, writing things down helps.”

“Don’t be lax about applying to colleges; if you don’t turn in the necessary materials on time, you will not get in, and you will not be able to enjoy life again until you do”

Essay writing

“Definitely have about 6-8 different people peer edit your college essay.”

“Take time to think about each essay and supplement and put your voice and ideas in them.”

“Be yourself and don’t rush through the essay questions.”

“When writing about yourself and your experiences, make sure that it’s an interesting piece that reveals something about yourself. Don’t write a boring generic story that you THINK people want to hear.”

“Have multiple people read your essay!”

Looking for colleges

“Make sure you have plenty of options! Also, if there are any schools that you have in the back of your mind even if you think it’s unrealistic, give it a shot. I ended up going to a school that at the beginning of the application process I wasn’t even seriously considering, but now it’s the best decision I’ve ever made!”

“Explore options that might be outside your comfort zone.”

“Apply to reach-schools, you’ll probably get in.”

“Take it seriously. It’s a big decision that is worth spending a lot of time thinking/talking/researching about.”

“Don’t overdo it when applying to schools and waste time on endless applications. In the end, the choice will probably only come down to a few anyways.”

“Try to tour a lot of colleges”

“Give yourself options!”

“You really have to explore colleges in depth using their websites, talking to students, etc. This process has to be done on your own, even though guidance and parents are there to support you as well.”

“Really think about where you see yourself at four years from now.”

“Remember to consider the cost of colleges and the amount of financial aid that they give.”

Overwhelming but don't worry!

“It's a grind, just keep working day by day.”

“It's a lot of paperwork, sure, but trust me, it's worth it once you get in.”

“Ask for help, there are people available who know what to do and are willing and available to help. Take advantage of it while you can.”

“At first the process seems very confusing and overwhelming, but take things one step at a time. It's also helpful to sit by yourself and try to work through it alone.”

“It can be very stressful, but take a deep breath and realize that everything is going to come together in the end and that it is totally worth it!”

“Everything will work out”

“It feels incredibly overwhelming in the moment, but once you get to college, you'll realize how silly you were for being incredibly stressed about it. College is wonderful, and try to remember that very soon, you will be out the other side.”

Finding a “fit”

“Biggest personal piece of advice is that the college experience is WAY more than just an education. It's important to think about a school that will support ALL aspects of your personal well being and growth...consider the types of people that school will attract and whether or not you will be challenged by and made better by them, think about the location of the school and whether it make sense for your career.... think about whether the school will be spiritually a good fit, whether it is academically comfortable for you (don't go to a school that doesn't challenge you, but also avoid going to a school that was such a reach that you will be in over your head), think about how far away from home (So many people try to do something bold and new and move far away/try out a drastically different culture, and then realize they're a homebody who likes the culture of NE and that they need to be closer to family) etc... The 4 years spent at college end up changing you in SOOO many ways, so it's important to consider ALL aspects of your personal well being and growth and to make sure the school you choose will support most if not all of those needs.”

“Go to where you feel most comfortable not where other friends are going.”

Academic

“Work really hard first semester of senior year, don't slack.”