

Albert Einstein Academy for Letters, Arts and Sciences



College Counseling Handbook 2016-2017

Albert Einstein Academy for Letters, Arts and Sciences
28141 Kelly Johnson Parkway
Santa Clarita, CA, 91355

Telephone: 661-702-0755

Facsimile: 661-775-0321
Website: www.ealas.org
CEEB Code: 054493

Administration

Michael McDonnell, Ed.D.
Principal
Mike.mcdonnell@ealas.org

Michael Fishler
Assistant Principal
Michael.fishler@ealas.org

Counseling Staff

Janna Largent
Counselor
Janna.Largent@ealas.org

Jeremy Levine
Counselor
Jeremy.Levine@ealas.org

Registrar

Wendi Mann
Wendi.Mann@ealas.org

Standardized Testing

The College Board (SAT, Subject Tests) - www.collegeboard.com
ACT – www.actstudent.org

Other Resources

www.finaid.org (for links to scholarships and explanation of the financial aid process)
www.fastweb.com (free scholarship search engine)
www.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply (to access the UC application)
www.csumentor.edu (to access the California State University application)
www.commonapp.org (to access the Common Application)
<http://eligibilitycenter.org> (NCAA Clearinghouse for college athletes)

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Ten Steps to Apply to College

1. Make a List

The ideal list is created in collaboration with your college counselor. Balance is key with 2 – 3 schools in each of the following categories: Reach, Target, and Likely.

2. Do the “Paperwork”

Complete the Record Release Form. This form gives AEA permission to send your transcripts to the colleges to which you are applying. Request transcripts from other institutions you have attended (i.e.: if you transferred to AEA from another high school, or took a summer school class). You are responsible for contracting the registrars at those schools to request transcripts well before application deadline.

3. Request Two Teacher References

Ask two teachers (in person please!), from your junior or senior year of school, to write letters of reference on your behalf. In an effort to help them better understand all that you have done during your high school career, you will complete a “Student Brag Sheet” and make a copy for each teacher from whom you request a reference. Also, please be sure to provide the teachers with any forms from the colleges or universities to which you are applying.

4. Fill Out the Application

Many schools utilize the Common Application. Other schools have their own application forms that are not Common Application formats. Always print out a copy of your completed online application in case something happens to it while its being electronically transmitted. Always proof your online application before you send it.

5. Pay the Application Fee!

Some people forget to pay their application fee when they apply online – don’t let that be you! See your college counselor if the application fee is a financial burden for your family. They may be able to request a fee waiver for you.

6. Save a Confirmation

All colleges and universities will email you a confirmation within minutes of your submitting an application. If you don’t receive such an email, check your application and phone the admission office to investigate. Please save the confirmation – this will be your proof of when the application was sent.

7. Demonstrate Your Interest (Interviews/College Visits/Programs)

Most private colleges and universities are looking for an applicant to “demonstrate interest” beyond submitting an application. Interviews and college tours are two common ways of demonstrating interest. Schedule both as soon as possible, following the schools instructions. Interview policies vary greatly from

school to school, and it is your job to do that research. When visiting college campuses, be sure they know you were there; sign in at the admission office. When colleges visit AEA or hold evening programs in your neighborhood, be sure to attend if time allows.

8. Take the SATs/ACTs

Most colleges will require the SAT and recommend two subject tests or require the ACT with writing. Register for the SAT's at www.collegeboard.org. Register for the ACT's at www.actstudent.org. See your counselor if you're uncertain which standardized test to take.

9. Send Your Scores

Colleges must receive official copies of your ACT or SAT scores from the testing agency. Use the websites listed above to have your scores sent to each college to which you're applying. To avoid confusion and save time, we strongly recommend against using the "Score Choice" options. Most colleges and universities, such as the UC's, Stanford and various Ivies, will not accept score choice. UC's require that you send scores to only one of the campuses to which you are applying (any one of your choice). They will share scores with other UC campuses.

10. Do Well in School

Students are often shocked to learn that their senior year grades can be influential in the colleges' decisions – positively and negatively. In the case of a significant grade drop, seniors have had offers of admission revoked by their college in the middle of the summer; just weeks before they are due to arrive on campus.

GETTING STARTED

Self-Evaluation

The first step to finding the right college for you is self-evaluation. Considering factors such as: climate, school size, location, field of study, financial aid and scholarships, sports, job or research opportunities, will greatly influence the colleges to which you will apply. The questionnaire you complete on Family Connection addresses many of the factors that go into selecting a college.

Organization

A dedicated college calendar located in a central place in your home, a file folder for each college in your email "inbox," a file folder, and a notebook are a few simple tools that will help you organize the material you send and receive throughout the college process. Starting immediately, file every piece of college material of interest, and organize it by college. In addition, mark in your calendar standardized test dates, application and financial aid deadlines, interview dates, college representatives' AEA visit date, and other related dates. Make it a habit to review your calendar daily, especially in your senior year. File notes and photos you take during campus visits so you can return to them for

reference. Keep good notes on every contact you make with different schools. For example, if you visit a campus, you should record the date of your visit, names of people you met, such as admission officials, tour guides, alumni, etc. Always make a copy of all material you send to colleges. Your organization will allow you document every part of the process, which is especially important should a college lose you application.

E-mail Address / Social Networking Sites

Most schools correspond with applicants via email. Many schools deliver their admission decisions electronically and when admission officers have questions about you application, they will sometimes email you for clarification. As such, it is extremely important that you have an operating email account that you check frequently with an appropriate email address (your AEA email address is perfect). College officials may perceive email addresses that may seem funny or cute to you and your friends very differently. Get into the habit of checking your email on a daily basis. Often schools perceive email as the fastest means for reaching you, but that's only true if you are checking your mail. When it comes to FaceBook or blogs, be extra cautious. If there is something out there that may be perceived as inappropriate, you may jeopardize your candidacy. Remember, everything you put on the web is public, even if your privacy parameters are set to allow only your friends to view your account.

Resources

There are many different ways to obtain information about college options as well as learn more about the college choice process, a few of which are listed below:

- **Course Catalogues**
They often list the history of the institution, all of the departments, professors, and detailed descriptions of all courses offered. In addition, you will find the cost of attendance, entrance and graduation requirements, special programs and faculty and administrative rosters listed.
- **Virtual Tours**
Virtual tours can be found on many institutional websites. Second to visiting the actual campus, virtual tours are really worth viewing to get a sense of a schools physical environment.
- **Guidebooks**
There are hundreds of college guidebooks available. You should consult a guidebook as a reference for gathering general information and making general comparisons, but DO NOT view its contents as the ultimate authority. A good guidebook is *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*.
- **Websites**
College websites are a treasure of information on admission requirements and procedure and departmental offerings and requirements. Be wary of websites not hosted by a particular campus – Unigo and College Confidential are NOT reliable sources of information (and neither is FaceBook).

- **College Fair**
Each spring students are invited to the NACAC National College Fair held in Pasadena, California. Students should come prepared with questions regarding specific programs, admissions policies, etc...
- **Alumni and Current Students**
Alumni, as well as the current students of the schools in which you are interested in applying, can offer great insight from a personal perspective.
- **Professors**
If you are particularly interested in a field of study, it might be a good idea to talk to a professor in the department at the college you are considering. Often admissions officials can answer general questions, but may not have more in depth information on particular areas of study. By visiting the website or course catalogue, you will learn who to contact for further information.

Independent College Counselors

There are many independent counselors who offer college-counseling services outside of AEA. If you are considering using the services of an independent counselor, be wary of lofty promises and plans that seem too good to be true. Independent counselors cannot write letters of recommendations, do not know your teachers, do not have access to statistical records, and cannot advocate for you.

The greatest concern the college counseling office has is that the more time a student spends with their independent counselor, the less time they spend with school counselors who are ultimately responsible for representing the student in the most complete and detailed way. If you do engage the services of an independent counselor, please let your counselor know so they can partner with that person on your behalf.

Below is a list of helpful questions to use when interviewing independent counselors:

1. Do you guarantee admission to a school, one of my top choices, or a certain minimum dollar value in scholarships?
2. How do you keep up with new trends, academic changes and evolving campus cultures: How often do you get out and visit college campuses and meet with admission representatives? (The only way to know what is the best match for you is to be out visiting schools regularly).
3. Do you belong to any professional associations?
4. Do you attend professional conferences or training workshops on a regular basis to keep up with regional and national trends and changes in law?

5. Do you ever accept any form of compensation from a school, program, or company in exchange for placement or a referral? (They absolutely should not!)
6. Are all fees involved stated in writing, up front, indicating exactly what services I will receive for those fees?
7. Will you complete the application for admission, re-write my essays or fill out the financial aid form on my behalf? (This should not happen, as it is essential that the student should be in charge of the process and the submitted information should be a product of the student's work.)
8. How long have you been in business as an independent college counselor?
9. What was your background prior to going into counseling/What was your training and education?
10. What specialized training do you have (LD, gifted, athletics, arts, etc.)?
11. Do you adhere to the ethical guidelines for private counseling established by IECA?

Interviews

Interview policies vary from school to school. Not all applicants are granted interviews. However, if a school offers interviews for its applicants, you should seize the opportunity to obtain an interview as early in the application process as possible. The result on any interview seldom makes or breaks an admission decision. Nonetheless, failure to show up for a scheduled interview, use bad language, being inappropriately dressed and showing discourteous to interviewers will absolutely have a negative impact on your candidacy.

Whether a school offers an on-campus interview, local alumni interview, a phone interview, or possibly even a Skype interview, the rules of the interview remain the same. Prior to your interview, be sure you have researched the school and have genuine comments and questions to present to the interviewer. The interview should NOT be your first contact with any school, and should NOT be used as your first change to gather information about that school. Local colleges and universities that grant interviews will NOT understand if you don't interview – there is no excuse if you live within easy driving distance. Consider the interview as another change for you to know the school better, and for the school to now you better. The interview is also your opportunity to explain things that can't be adequately captured by your application.

Tips For A Successful College Interview

Think of the interview as a conversation between two people who would like to get to know each other better. In this conversation, you should be asking questions that help you determine if this college or university is the right place for you live and learn for four

whole years. The interviewer will be doing something similar – determining if the school can meet your needs, and if you be able to contribute to the life of the community in some way. Be prepared to ask questions about the college or university that cannot be answered by doing simple research. Do not ask a question such as, “How many students attend this school?” You will appear as though you are not resourceful enough to gather such basic facts. A question such as this is more likely to make an impression: “At my high school, it’s been really easy for me to have close relationships with my teachers. Do you think that students at this school would say that it is easy or difficult to gain access to their professors? Will the professor only see me during office hours, or can I drop in any time they are there?”

You may also want to interview the interviewer. People love to talk about themselves. Feel free to ask where the interviewer when tot college and how they went about choosing that particular place. IF the interviewer doesn’t work in the admission office (perhaps they are an alumnus and a volunteer interviewer), ask what they do for a living and be sure to ask about their experience at their alma mater.

Prior to an interview, it’s a good idea to scan a newspaper for the headlines, log on to Google and hit the “new” link, or listen to NPR’s Morning Edition. Sometimes, interviewers will ask your opinion on political events or major happenings. Also be prepared to share your thoughts about a book you’ve read recently. Following are more popular interview questions you should be prepared to answer:

- What 3 adjectives would your best friend use to describe you? Why?
- What have you enjoyed most about your high school years?
- What activities have you found most satisfying?
- What things do you do well? What are your strengths and talents?
- Which weaknesses would you like to improve?
- Which of your courses have challenged you? How?
- What have been your most stimulating intellectual experiences?
- What would you change about your school if you had the chance?
- What do you do for relaxation? For fun?
- How do you define success?
- How would you describe your family? Your community?
- What issues concern you?

- Which authors, books, or articles have had a profound effect on you?
- How do you spend your summers?
- If you could take a year off, how would you spend it?

Dress comfortably, but not casually. Nice pants (not jeans) and a shirt/sweater should do the job. Avoid tank tops, ripped clothing, flip-flops, shorts, t-shirts, etc, these items are too casual for an interview. Who interviews you (alumni, student or admission officer) and where you will be interviewed (local Starbucks, a law firm, or the schools admission office) will also help determine what you choose to wear. Two more things - a firm handshake and eye contact go a long way.

Finally, be sure to get a business card, or a name and mailing address from the interviewer at the conclusion of the interview so you can send them a note thanking them for their time and perhaps to ask questions you think of later.

School Visits

On average students apply to about ten schools; this makes it difficult for the student and their families to visit all the schools they have applied to. In order to make the best decision try to visit a sampling of local colleges and universities that are similar to colleges you have applied to. For example, you might visit a large public school (UCLA) and compare it to a smaller private school (Occidental) or an urban campus compared to a suburban or rural campus. Once you have narrowed down your list, then it might be a good idea to go further away from home to visit the schools that you have applied for that are similar to the ones you like that were close to home. Another alternative is visiting schools once you have been admitted in the spring of your senior year, prior to making your final choice.

Spring Break of the junior year and summer vacation are good times to visit colleges. Keep in mind that weekday visits are usually far more “normal” than weekend visits. Classes are in session, and students are out and about. Also, keep in mind that college students tend to avoid early morning and Friday classes.

To set up a student-led campus tour, go to the visitor link on the schools websites or call the admission office or visitor center to make a reservation. The student, and not the parents should do this phone call. Some things you might want to find out when talking with an admission officer are: does the school do interviews, is there an opportunity to stay overnight in the dorms or is there a college preview weekend.

Plan to visit the disabilities resource center if you think you might use their services. Talk to the center’s staff. You might want to call ahead to make an appointment.

After Your Visit

Send quick “thank-you” notes to people who were especially helpful such as interviewers, overnight hosts, professors, tour guides, or coaches. Spend some time reflecting upon your visit: the good, the bad, and the questions you still have. Compare notes with friends who are also considering the same college. Finally, be sure to review your campus visit with your counselor and update your evolving college list.

TESTING

The College Entrance Examination Board Code (CEEB Code) at AEA is 054493. Memorize this number; you will need it a lot, especially when taking the SAT and SAT Subject Tests.

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Qualifying Test)

This test is given in October to high school juniors and sophomores (though sophomores are not eligible to complete in the National Merit Scholarship selection). The results can be used as a predictor of the SAT scores. Primarily, however, these scores are used as counseling and guidance tools, although very strong results can be the basis for merit scholarships for juniors. The PSAT scores are not seen or used by colleges in the admission process. It is a source of some college mailing. Scaled scores are 20-80 for each section or 60-240 composite.

SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) Register at www.collegeboard.com

This test has three components: Writing an essay in which students are asked to take a position on an issue and use examples to support their position and includes multiple choice questions. Math includes Algebra II topics, such as exponential growth, absolute value, and functional notation. The SAT will place great emphasis on other topics such as linear functions, manipulations with exponents, and properties of tangent lines. The Critical Reading includes both short and long passages and sentence completion questions. The SAT Reasoning Test is approximately 3 hours and 35 minutes. The SAT has three scores, each on the familiar 200 - 800 scale with a maximum of 2400.

SAT Subject Tests Register at www.collegeboard.com

These are offered six times a year (October, November, December, January, May and June) and students may take up to three of the one-hour tests on any of the dates offered. Tests are given in U.S. History, Biology, Chemistry, Chinese Listening, French Reading, French Listening, German, Hebrew, Japanese, Latin, Literature, Mathematics Levels 1 & II, Physics, Russian, Spanish Reading, Spanish Listening, World History and Writing. The test has a scaled score of between 200–800 points per test. These tests should be taken at the conclusion of a year – long course (for example, Biology, U.S. History). Consult your teachers about whether they think you are ready to take a subject test in that specific area.

ACT Register at www.actstudent.org

The ACT is a curriculum based test and is accorded the same weight as the SAT by college admission offices. The ACT is NOT designed and administered by the College Board (creators of the SAT and subject tests). Therefore, the test dates and locations are different. The ACT tests your academic skills in the following areas: English, Math, Reading, Science Reasoning, and writing. Some students prefer the ACT's relatively straightforward approach, as it more closely resembles classroom content. The ACT with Writing has gained recognition across the nation and is accepted by all colleges in lieu of the SAT reasoning exam.

SAT/ACT Conversion Table

New SAT Composite Score	ACT Composite Score
1600	36
1560-1590	35
1520-1550	34
1490-1510	33
1450-1480	32
1420-1440	31
1390-1410	30
1350-1380	29
1310-1340	28
1280-1300	27
1240-1270	26
1200-1230	25
1160-1190	24
1130-1150	23
1100-1120	22
1060-1090	21
1020-1050	20
980-1010	19
940-970	18
900-930	17
860-890	16
810-850	15
760-800	14
720-750	13
630-710	12
560-620	11

TEST PREP PROGRAMS

Below is a list of places in the area that have test prep programs available for students. Please note that AEA doesn't endorse any one of these programs and provides the list in an effort to help you find such services available in the area. Please remember that many students achieve success on standardized tests *without* test prep! A motivated and disciplined student can work with a book such as the College Board's *The Official SAT Study Guide* and do quite well.

Name	Telephone	Website
Math Support	661-255-1730	http://www.mathsupportservices.com/sat-act-prep/
Eureka	877-463-8735	http://www.eurekareview.com/
Princeton Review	818-679-9454	http://www.princetonreview.com/
Lighthouse Learning	661.255.2202	http://www.drchang.net/lighthouse/programs/sat-psat-prep
ELITE	661-259-0052	http://www.eliteprep.com/programs/
Catalyst Test Prep	800.235.0056	http://catalystprep.com/sat_prep

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

How to obtain applications

Many schools now make their admissions applications available online or require students to complete the Common Application at www.commonapp.org. The application process will vary with each school and students are encouraged to review the requirements by visiting the website of each of the schools to which you wish to apply.

Common Application

There are over 400 colleges and universities that use the Common Application. The simple idea behind this widely used applications is, "Do it once and do it well!" However, in addition to filling out this application, most colleges also ask students to complete a "supplement," which is typically an additional essay or other questions specific to that particular college. Also note that application deadlines are school specific and NOT set by the Common Application. To learn more about the Common Application and to register as a user, visit www.commonapp.org.

Early Decision/Early Action

Both early decision and early action are programs that allow student to apply to a college at an earlier deadline. Early decision is a legally binding application a student selects when they have identified a clear first choice and are ready to attend that college if admitted, withdrawing all other applications upon acceptance. Student can only apply to one institution via early decision. Students apply early action, a non-binding program, for a few reasons: the school doesn't offer ED but it is a clear first choice; it may be slightly easier to be admitted to that school through early action; and to find out early (mid year) that a student is admitted. Students can apply to multiple early action schools.

If you are considering an early program, you must consult with your college counselor. Early programs should not be viewed as a strategic measure for getting into selective schools. Instead, they should only be used if you are sure the school you are applying to is your absolute first choice, dream school. Keep in mind that students who apply are pretty self-selecting group with higher than average test scores, GPA's, and stronger overall profiles than their counterparts in the regular application pool. Given how soon you must submit an early application, admission committees are making decisions primarily based on grades from 9th to 11th grades only. They expect to find enough strong evidence in those first three years of high school to be convinced to admit you.

Single Choice or Restrictive Early Action

This program is similar to Early Action in that it is non-binding and an applicant doesn't need to respond to the offer of admission until the common reply date of May 1. However, this program limits the applicant's ability to apply to any other colleges or universities via early programs.

Rolling & Priority Admission

Public universities typically use Rolling and Priority admissions. It is basically a first – come-first-serve process. As such, it is wise to apply as early as you can to schools that use this admission process. The good news is that applications for these schools tend to be less involved than most applications for private colleges. Therefore, it is a good idea to get them out as early as October, but no later than November. The sooner you submit an application, the sooner you are notified of the school's decision.

University of California and California State University Application Filing Period

Your application to the University of California must be submitted during the month of November, no sooner and no later. Your Cal State application can be filed between October 1 and November 30. Whether you are applying to one or several UC schools, you only need to fill out ONE application. There is a box on the application that asks you to indicate which UC schools you would like to apply to. You will hear back directly for each of the campuses you have applied to. Decisions notification varies from school to school, but you will usually hear back from all schools by April at the latest.

Regular Decision

The most popular application deadline is regular decision. Application deadlines vary from school to school, but the most common deadlines are January 1, and January 15. Students can receive decision letters as early as March, but generally in April, and have until May 1 to decide which college to attend. Three possible outcomes can result from a regular decision application: admission, denial or wait list.

Activities Chart/Resume

Most applications will ask you to list just about everything you do outside of the classroom. Many students are part of more activities/jobs than the given space on the application allows. Therefore, it is important that you start organizing as soon as possible, on a sheet of paper, what you have done outside of the classroom since 9th grade. You should have a few general categories such as volunteer work, paid positions,

summer school classes, music lessons, club or team sports, etc. Of course, you should also consult your college counselor for how best to organize your extra curricular activities as college often supply grids and charts that are hard to fill out.

FINANCIAL AID

College costs are at an all-time high and so is uncertainty among students and their families about the ability to pay the bills. With costs going up and the amount of financial aid available remaining about the same, there may not be enough help for everyone who needs it. There is no question that students and parents will be paying more than before toward the cost of an education. But there is also no question that you can improve your chances of getting financial aid by learning about it and by planning ahead.

What is financial aid?

Financial aid is help for meeting college costs, both direct educational costs (tuition, fees, and books) and person living expenses (room and board, personal expenses and travel). Broadly, financial aid is based on **need**, as determined by the College Scholarship Service, Federal guidelines, and institutional policies.

Need based Financial Aid

Individual colleges determine financial aid packages based upon the information provided by you on several forms – the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), the College Scholarship Service Profile, and the colleges own institutional forms. These forms will determine the estimated family contribution and help the financial aid office calculate the family’s contribution to the student’s educational costs. The difference between the cost of attending the college and the estimated family contribution is the need. The individual college will put together a financial aid “package” designed to meet that need. At most colleges, a package will include a combination of grant, loan and work study dollars.

Not every college can meet full need for every students; it is increasingly common for a student to be admitted but denied the full amount of financial aid needed to attend. This practice is called “gapping.” Some colleges do guarantee to meet 100% of demonstrated need.

Grants

These are funds that do not have to be repaid. Grants are usually awarded on the basis of need alone and can come from a variety of sources – Pell Grants (federal money), state grants (usually available only to students attending college in their home state, for example Cal Grant), and grant money from the colleges own resources.

Loans

These are funds that must be repaid, generally after you have graduated or left school, and usually have lower interest rates than commercial loans. There are two types of loans

available to students – William D Ford Federal Direct Loans (Direct Loan) and Federal Family Educational Loan (FFEL)

There are four different types of Federal Direct Loans including:

- *Subsidized* (the federal government pays the interest on these loans while students are in school but student must demonstrate financial need to qualify for this type of loan)
- *Unsubsidized* (students can get these loans regardless of financial need but will have to pay all interest charges including for periods in which they are enrolled)
- *PLUS* loans (parents of dependent students can get these loans to pay for their children's education and they are responsible for all interest charges. In addition, repayment begins 60 days after the final disbursement. There is no grace period and, therefore, repayment begins on principal and interest while the student is still in school. Parents may now choose to delay repayment while their students are enrolled; however, parents will still need to pay for any interest that accumulates during this period of deferred repayment)
- *Consolidation* loan (these loans combine one or more federal education loans in one new Federal Direct Loan)

Federal Work Study Program

Work-study involves earning money as payment for a job, usually one arranged for you by the college, and on or off of their campus. Students usually work less than twenty hours a week in an on or off-campus job selected by the student. The money is paid to the student in the form of a paycheck or as a credit to the student's bank account or student account at the college/university and can be used for college expenses.

Merit-Based Scholarship

A merit-based scholarship is a scholarship based on merit; you don't have to show financial need to qualify. Aside from the National Merit program and competitive scholarships that are sponsored by businesses and community service organization; a college or university, generally awards merit awards that are specifically for use at that institution. A religious, ethnic, or professional group may also sponsor merit. Some businesses also sponsor scholarships for the children of employees. Scholarships are often awarded for academic excellence, athletic prowess, artistic talent, leadership, or other criteria.

How does financial aid work?

You don't have to be low income to qualify, but you do have to demonstrate financial need. "Demonstrated financial need" is the difference between what it costs to attend a particular college and what you and your family can afford to pay toward those costs.

$$\text{Cost of attendance} - \text{What a family can pay} = \text{Demonstrated Financial Need}$$

You are usually eligible for financial aid equal to the amount of your demonstrated need. Since the amount you can pay stays the same whether the costs are high or low, you

would be eligible for different amounts of aid at different colleges. In fact, you could end up paying the same amount at a high-cost college, as you would at a lower cost one. Even if your family is relatively affluent, you may qualify for aid if educational costs are high enough. Here's an example:

		College A	College B	College C
Cost of Attendance		\$25,000	\$35,000	\$45,000
Expected Family Contribution (Parental and student from summer job)		\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Amount of Aid to be packaged		\$22,000	\$27,500	\$36,500
Financial Aid Package	Grants	\$19,000	\$27,500	\$36,500
	Loans	\$1,600	\$3,000	\$3,500
	Work Study	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$2,000

Many students and parents wonder if applying for aid will hurt the chances of admission. If you are applying for aid at a school where admission is "need-blind," it is less likely that they will make a decision based on whether or not you need aid. However, some colleges are faced with taking need into consideration, in which cases their admission decisions are "need award or need sensitive." If you are or think you may have demonstrated financial need paying for college may create a financial burden for your family, you should apply for financial aid, as it is often the only way to qualify for a loan which may sometimes be the only form of financial aid for which you are eligible. A good tool to use is the College Board Financial Calculator at <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/pay/add-it-up/index.html>.

Be sure to click on the Institutional Methodology Calculator for the most accurate assessment of your expected family contribution (EFC).

Each college and university is now required to have a Net Price Calculator on their website. This federally mandated tool will help students and their families to estimate their expected family contribution as well as the types and amounts of financial aid they might anticipate receiving if they attend a specific school.

Students and their families are encouraged to visit one of the most comprehensive financial aid sites available at: www.finaid.org and www.collegeboard.com.

Applying for Financial Aid

The most crucial part of applying for financial aid is adhering to deadlines for each form:

1. All students and parents applying for federal aid (including low-interest loan programs) will have to complete the FAFSA online, which comes from the Department of Education. This cannot be filed until after January 1st but should be filed as soon as possible after that date. It will call for figures from your most recent Tax Return, so parents should prepare taxes earlier than usual. NO EXTENSIONS! The form is sent to a central processor who analyzes it and sends the results, called a “needs analysis,” to the colleges and scholarship programs that have been designated by the applicant. Even if the prior year’s tax returns are not yet filed by the time the FAFSA needs to be submitted, students and their families should still complete the FAFSA with estimated data by each college’s financial aid deadline.
2. All students and parents applying for aid at any California college or university, public or private, should apply for California State Scholarships, commonly known as Cal Grants.
3. Many families applying to private colleges (and now, some selective public universities) will have to file the CSS PROFILE online at www.collegeboard.com, a customized financial aid form. Please note that the profile often has very early deadlines so if you suspect you may be applying to a particular college, phone to ask about their profile deadline. The PROFILE is tailored to reflect the specific requirements of the various colleges to which the student is applying and from which aid is being sought. There is a fee for the preliminary registration form in addition to a charge for each institution listed in a student’s PROFILE. You must check the college’s application materials to see if the PROFILE is required.
4. In addition to these standardized forms, some colleges still require short forms of their own, and some will request a certified copy of the most recent 1040 form. Each college has their own deadline. Make sure you know what it is for each college.

Two to three weeks after you submit your FAFSA and/or PROFILE, you will receive a Student Acknowledgement Report (SAR) indicating your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The colleges that you designate will receive this information as well. If you feel that your expected contribution, as calculated by the CSS is beyond your means, it is best to contact the financial aid administrator at the colleges directly. They will be interested in any supplemental data you may wish to provide. Letters explaining any unusual or special circumstances affecting the family’s financial situation should be submitted to each college financial aid office.

Financial Aid FAQ’s

- *Is need-based financial aid available only to people of very low income?*

No. You don't have to be poor to receive financial aid, but you do have to prove you need it. You are eligible for financial aid equal to the difference between the college costs and the amount you and your family can afford to contribute, as determined by the various financial aid application forms.

- ***Will I receive special consideration if I have brothers and sisters who are continuing their education beyond high school?***

Generally speaking, yes. Your parents cannot be expected to contribute as much as your college costs if you have siblings in college who they are assisting.

- ***Do I have to apply for financial aid every year?***

Yes. At most colleges you must apply each academic year. But applying for financial aid is almost always easier the second time around because there is less paperwork and you are more familiar with the process.

- ***My older brother was turned down for aid last year, should I still apply?***

Definitely. College costs, institutional policies and your family's financial circumstances can all change from one year to another. The only way to know for sure whether you are eligible for financial aid is to apply.

- ***My parents are divorced (separated). Who should fill out the FAFSA and PROFILE?***

The parent with whom you lived for the longest period in the last 12 months should fill out the forms for you. If you didn't live with either parent, or lived with each parent for an equal number of days, the FAFSA and PROFILE should be filled out by the parent who provided the most support for you in the last 12 months. Support means money for things like housing, food, clothes, car, and medical and dental care.

- ***My stepparent doesn't feel a responsibility to support my education. Is a stepparent expected to complete the FAFSA and PROFILE?***

Federal programs and most colleges expect a stepparent's information to be included on the FAFSA and PROFILE whenever the student lived in the household of the stepparent and parent.

- ***Do I have to wait until my parents file the latest income tax return before I file my FAFSA and PROFILE?***

No. But you should wait until you and /or your parents know what income you will be reporting on your tax returns; do an estimated return. Mail it as soon after January 1st as possible.

- ***My neighbor and I both applied for financial aid at the same school. Why did she get more aid than I did, when her family has a bigger house than our and her parents make more money than mine?***

The financial aid formulae used to assess family financial strength are designed to treat families in similar circumstances equally. There are many reasons why your neighbor may have received more money. For instance:

- Although her family has a larger house and a greater total income, they may also owe substantially more money on their home mortgage. If so, they would be able to contribute less to the college costs and would be eligible for more aid.
- The family might have financial circumstances of which you are unaware (more family members, extraordinary medical expenses, etc.)

Other Tips for Financial Aid Applicants

- Do not eliminate a college because you think it costs too much. Apply for admission and financial aid, and see what happens. Many colleges can meet the demonstrated need. Be sure that your college list has a range of tuition costs and “financial likely” schools – affordable colleges to which you will likely be admitted. Consider including the Cal State campuses, which have the lowest cost.
- Make copies of everything you submit for financial aid consideration, including your FAFSA and PROFILE forms.
- Rely on individual college financial officers rather than costly computer service organizations or scholarship/financial aid “experts” who solicit your business through the mail. If you get something in the mail and they charge you anything for their services this is likely costly SCAM DON’T DO IT! If you receive something and you want to check out its legitimacy, just ask one of the college counselors.

There is a website you can use to determine whether or not the mailing you received is a scam. Check it out: www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

English	4 years
Mathematics	3 years
Lab Science	3 years
Social Studies	4 years
Foreign Language	4 years
Visual / Performing Arts	2 years
College Preparatory Elective	2 years
Physical Education	1 year
Community Service	4 years

GRADING SYSTEM

- AEALAS does not rank its students.
- Both weighted and unweighted cumulative GPAs are reported.
- One point is added to the cumulative weighted GPAs for each Honors and AP course.
- Physical Education and Art courses are included in the GPA calculations.
- High school Mathematics and Foreign Language Courses taken in middle school are included in the GPA calculations.
- Admission to AEALAS is open to the public, however, when there are more applicants than there are available spaces a random, public lottery is held.

GRADE SCALE

A	Excellent	94-100	4.0
A-		90-93	3.66
B+		88-89	3.33
B	Above Average	84-87	3.0
B-		80-83	2.66
C+		78-79	2.33
C	Average	74-77	2.0
C-		70-73	1.66
D+		67-69	1.33
D	Below Average	64-66	1.0
D-		60-63	0.66
F	Fail	< 60	0.00

GRADING PERIODS

Semester I: August-December
 Semester II: January-May

HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

English	English 9 English 10 English 11 English 12 AP English Lang. and Composition AP English Literature
Mathematics	Algebra Geometry Algebra II Pre-Calculus Calculus* AP Calculus AB
Lab Science	Biology Chemistry Physics* Earth Science AP Biology
Social Studies	History 9 History 10 United States History United States Government Economics* AP European History AP U.S. History AP U.S. Government* AP Economics (Macro)* AP Economics (Micro)*
Foreign Language	Spanish 1, 2, 3, 4 Hebrew 1, 2, 3, 4 Arabic 1, 2, 3, 4* Mandarin 1, 2, 3, 4 AP Spanish Language* Latin*
Visual /Performing Arts	Studio Art Band Modern Music Music Appreciation Filmmaking* Study of Film* Drama* Photography*
College Prep. Electives	Journalism* Speech and Debate* Literary Journal* Creative Writing* Yearbook* Or, any course taken that exceeds the minimum requirement in that subject necessary for graduation *pending UC approval (retroactive)

COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT

The Community Service Program is integral to the AEALAS philosophy and mission. For each year enrolled at the school, a student must carry out a minimum of 15 hours of community service in Middle School and 25 hours in High School in order to complete their graduation requirements.