

Life After York Q & A: Parent to Parent Advice

Highly Selective Colleges and Universities

Highly Selective Schools - generally acceptance rates lower than 20%

Ivy League	Some others	Some others
Brown University*	Duke University*	Calif. Inst. of Tech.*
Columbia University*	Mass. Ins. of Tech. (MIT)*	US Naval Academy*
Cornell University*	Northwestern University*	US Military Academy*
Dartmouth College	Stanford University*	Julliard
Harvard University	Tufts University*	Pomona College
Princeton University	University of Chicago*	Swarthmore*
University of Penn.*	Univ. of Notre Dame*	Amherst College*
Yale University*	Vanderbilt University*	Wash. Univ. in St. Louis*

Sample of Admissions Statistics*

College Name	Overall 2018 Acceptance Rate	Average Admitted York GPA	Middle 50% SAT	Middle 50% ACT
Brown Univ.	7.2%	4.92	1370-1570	31-34
Columbia Univ.	5.5%	4.85	1410-1590	32-35
Duke Univ.	9.8%	4.79	1380-1570	32-35
Harvard Univ.	4.6%	4.90	1430-1600	32-35
MIT	6.7%	4.88	1460-1590	33-35
Northwestern Univ.	8.4%	4.81	1400-1560	32-34
Princeton Univ.	5.5%	4.85	1400-1590	32-35
Stanford Univ.	4.3%	4.92	1380-1580	31-35
Univ. of Chicago	7.2%	4.73	1450-1600**	32-35**
Univ. of Penn.	8.4%	4.81	1380-1570	32-35
Vanderbilt Univ.	9.6%	4.74	1420-1590	32-35
Yale University	6.3%	4.92	1420-1600	32-35

*Prepared by Amy Thompson, York CCRC counselor, using a variety of sources for university data and Naviance for York GPA data.

**Test optional university.

Tips from Two Sources

U.S. News

1. **Get an early start and finish strong:** Get the best possible education your school has to offer.
2. **Challenge yourself responsibly:** While grades remain the single biggest factor in admissions decisions, strength of curriculum is an ever-closer second.
3. **Don't apply too broadly:** "It's tough to put together a personal, genuine application that shows commitment to a particular school when you're applying to 20 places."
4. **There's room for error:** "You don't need a perfect record to get into the school of your dreams." The personal essay, teacher recommendations, or an interview can clarify a discrepancy.
5. **Don't just be a joiner:** "It's better to be involved in fewer activities wholeheartedly over time, rather than 9 or 10 superficially."
6. **Work the wait list:** "Don't regard that letter as a polite denial."
7. **Be true to yourself:** "Don't push an Ivy on your student, if s/he'd be happier at a smaller liberal arts school."

<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2012/09/25/focus-on-7-strategies-to-get-into-college>

Prep Scholar

1. Take the **most difficult classes** throughout high school while earning **very high grades**.
2. Standardized test scores are also very important; your **scores should be at or above the average for admitted students**.
3. It's important to show **excellence in one academic or extracurricular area** if you want to stand out from the crowd.
4. These schools appreciate **passion, drive, and outside-the-box thinking**.

<https://blog.prepscholar.com/the-most-selective-colleges-in-the-us> (8/6/18).

Parent to Parent Tips - Fr./So./Jr. Year

- ▶ SAT Subject Tests: Many selective schools suggest or require SAT Subject tests. Consider taking as early as freshman or sophomore year, i.e., after Honors Biology or Honors Chemistry.
- ▶ Activities: Don't miss opportunities junior year like NHS and State Seal of Biliteracy. Students don't have to cure cancer to be accepted, however they do need to have a story to tell and the basics compared to peers.
- ▶ ACT or SAT: Consider taking as early as fall junior year, so there is time for retakes and tutoring, if desired. Consider waiting to send scores if taking tests on more than one occasion. Be aware that fees apply if you wait but poor scores are thereby not submitted. Please note, some colleges require all scores be sent from each test attempt.
- ▶ A student may want to consider attending a summer college program at a school of particular interest. Please note, these programs can be extremely expensive. It may help to boost essays tailored to that dream school.

Parent to Parent Tips - Jr./Sr. Year

- ▶ On visits, consider meeting with a professor in a specific field of interest or sit in on a class. Demonstrate continued interest by making a second visit, writing follow-up notes, responding timely to requests for paperwork and financial aid materials. Some colleges even track whether or not a student has clicked on emails sent from the school. For some schools, this is indicative of the student's level of interest in the school.
- ▶ Tailor applications accordingly. Each school prides itself on being unique and applications should reflect that! Look for a specialty within the school or student program that is unique to that school.
- ▶ Early Decision, Early Action, Restricted Early Action - Care should be taken in determining if applying early is right for your student. Research the pros and cons. Decisions are binding in some cases. Acceptance rates may be higher for early applicants, but there are lots of factors, like financial aid, to consider.
- ▶ Don't make your student feel that their personal worth hinges upon their acceptance to a highly selective school.
- ▶ Watch for signs of stress in your student (e.g. stomachaches or other unusual symptoms). Be observant and ask questions.