

Early Decision & Early Action

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Presenter:

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Tonight's Agenda

- ✧ Types of Admissions Programs
- ✧ Advantages & Disadvantages of Early Admission Programs
- ✧ Recent Trends: 2017 State of College Admissions Report (NACAC)
- ✧ Implications for CCHS Students
- ✧ Recent CCHS Data
- ✧ Advice for CCHS Students & Parents
- ✧ Recommended Reading

Types of College Admissions Programs

- Regular Decision (RD)
- Rolling Admission (Rolling)
- Early Decision (ED)
- Early Action (EA)
- Restrictive Early Action (REA)

What is Early Decision?

Early Decision is an early application program, which gives students an opportunity to apply to (and hear back from) college earlier than the regular admissions deadline. If accepted under Early Decision, a student is under strong ethical obligation to attend the college and to withdraw or forego applications to all other colleges.

Expansion of Early Decision

- Initially, ED was unique to the most competitive colleges in the country. Over the past 20 years, ED has expanded & many colleges now offer this option, including ED Round I and ED Round II.
- Most colleges have grown ED programs to yield anywhere from 30-50% (or more) of their incoming freshman class, leaving fewer slots available for the regular applicant pool.

Important Notes on Early Decision:

- Many private colleges exchange lists of students admitted Early Decision
- Colleges take the Early Decision commitment very seriously. Therefore, a student, who does not follow through on her commitment, will be viewed unfavorably by that college and any others that may become aware of the situation.

Early Decision: Implications for the Institution

Advantages:

- Improves their yield & consequently, their rankings
- Helps them to plan enrollment levels
- Assists with their financial aid budget, as ED applicants tend to be wealthier on average

Disadvantages:

- There are few disadvantages
- If they admit a high percentage of their incoming freshman class ED, then they may limit their ability to admit strong candidates in the regular applicant pool.

Early Decision: Implications for the Student

Advantages:

- May improve chances of admission to a top choice IF student is a viable candidate for that school (Note: Early Decision is not a good strategy for the “reach” school)
- Can simplify the application process, if a student is admitted early

Disadvantages:

- Limits a family’s ability to compare financial aid packages across different institutions
- Requires the student to make a commitment early in the senior year – perhaps when they aren’t ready.
- Pressure to apply somewhere early can add to student stress

What is Early Action?

- Introduced in the early to mid-1990s, Early Action (EA) programs allow students to apply early without the binding commitment of Early Decision.
- Students may apply to more than one college in the fall (Nov 1, Nov 15, Dec 1) and receive a decision usually in 30-45 days
- Decision is non-binding, so student can wait until May 1st to make their final choice.
- Ability to compare financial aid packages among colleges.
- Students can often apply ED to one college and EA to multiple schools without penalty - as long as the student withdraws their EA applications upon acceptance to the ED school AND the EA program is not “restrictive” or “single choice” (e.g., Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, BC).
- Most colleges offer EA programs - in addition to OR instead of ED.

Early Action: Implications for the Institution

Advantages:

- Increases their total number of applications, which lowers their admit rate (a factor which is used in college rankings)
- Gives the institution more time to recruit admitted students

Disadvantages:

- Early Action programs have become less helpful in predicting their yield than regular decision programs
- For some institutions, it has created an overwhelming influx of applications that they haven't been prepared to handle

Early Action: Implications for the Student

Advantages:

- Allows the student to apply and hear back from colleges early in the process without having to make a binding commitment
- Ability to compare financial aid packages across institutions
- Final choice/deposit not required until May 1st of senior year

Disadvantages:

- Requires a student to complete his/her applications early in the senior year –adding to the stress seniors may feel around the process
- May not significantly improve chances for admission as the EA review process can be more selective than RD at some schools

2017 State of College Admissions Report

National Association for College Admission Counseling

- The number of U.S. high school graduates peaked in 2011-12 at 3.45 million after two decades of steady growth. These numbers will fluctuate over the next decade with a projected 3.39 million in 2023-2024. This pattern of change fluctuates widely by state and region.
- Even as the number of HS graduates has slightly declined, enrollment at private and public 4-year colleges has actually increased. The US Dept of Education expects the total number of college students to gradually increase from 2013 to 2023 to 23.8 million.
- Application volume continues to rise at most colleges and universities with students applying to more colleges. In Fall 2016, 35% of all students applying to college applied to 7 or more schools – up from 17% in 2005 and 9% in 1990.

2017 State of College Admissions Report

National Association for College Admission Counseling

- In fall 2016, the average acceptance rate for all US colleges & universities was 66.1%. A decline in admit rates is generally found at the most highly selective colleges - those which also receive a disproportionate number of applications nationally compared to the share of students they enroll.
- 39% of reporting colleges used a Wait List. In 2016, wait list offers increased by 11%. 23% of students who remained on the wait list were eventually offered admission. However, the most selective institutions or those yielding a high percentage of the freshman class through Early Decision were less likely to offer admission from the wait list.

2017 State of College Admissions Report

National Association for College Admission Counseling

- From fall 2015 to fall 2016, there was a 5% increase in ED applications and an 6% increase in ED admits. Yet, **ED applications represented only 6% of the overall applications received by schools offering ED.**
- Colleges with ED reported higher acceptance rates for ED applicants than the acceptance rate for all applicants (60% vs. 48%)
- From fall 2015 to fall 2016, there was a 15% increase in EA applications and a 16% increase in EA admits. However, in recent years, the acceptance rate for EA applications has fluctuated. It was nearly identical to the regular applicant pool (67% versus 66%) in 2010, but higher than the regular admitted pool in 2016 (71% versus 65%).
- Unlike ED (where the average yield rate for ED admits is substantially higher than regular admits), the average yield rate for EA admits is nearly identical to that of regular admits.

2017 State of College Admissions Report

National Association for College Admission Counseling

- With the number of international students attending US high schools, colleges and universities AND an increasing number of US students seeking to study abroad, there is now a global dynamic to the world of college admissions
- Colleges and universities are increasing their recruitment efforts to attract transfer and international students
- Yield rates are higher and seemingly more predictable amongst transfer and international students than the traditional applicant pool

Implications for CCHS Students

- In the past 25 years, there has been a significant increase in the number of CCHS students applying early - from 20% to 90%
- This year alone, CCHS saw a 17% increase in ED applications and 6% increase in students doing something early!
- With the current climate, most students will likely continue to apply early to college, either ED or EA
- **If** a student is a viable candidate for a college **and** finances are not a major consideration for the family, then ED might help their chances of admission

Recent CCHS Data

Class of 2017

246 students (78% of class) applied Early Decision or Early Action
54% of those who applied ED/EDII were accepted
94% of students who applied early were accepted to at least 1 college early

314 students completed 2,492 applications (mean per student~8 applications)

Class of 2018

(as of 1/9/2018)

3,140 transcript requests have been received to date representing 90% of seniors (inc. regular decision)

104 seniors applied ED I (49 students or 47% were admitted)

14 seniors applied EDII (includes 4 who were not admitted EDI)

234 seniors (70.4%) applied EA (includes several seniors who also applied EDI or EDII)

332 seniors submitted 3,140 requests (mean per student~9.5 applications)

Implications for Financial Aid

- ED applicant's commitment to enroll is contingent upon "adequate financial aid offer". What does this mean?
- Commitment is binding if the college does not require a family to pay more than their Expected Family Contribution as determined by their FAFSA

Advice for Students:

- Follow our recommended timeline. This will give you more time to consider your options.
- Use data in Naviance to determine where you might fit within the applicant pool at any given school.
- Consider applying early...but make sure the decision is well-thought out and researched! ED will not help you get into a “reach” school.
- Don't apply ED because “everyone else” is or because you just want to get applications over with.
- Only Consider ED IF: you've done your homework, you know the school is the “ONE” for you, you will have a strong application & you are ready to make the commitment.

Advice for Parents:

- Carefully consider your financial situation - what can you afford to pay?
- Use one of on-line financial aid calculator tools to get a sense of what your EFC may be
- Visit the Financial Aid office in addition to the Admissions office when visiting a college
- Be honest with your son/daughter about finances from the beginning
- Remember a lot of growing up can take place in the senior year. Your son/daughter's perspectives and interests may change - so if s/he really isn't ready to commit to an ED agreement, that's okay!

Recommended Reading

- “The Plague of ‘Early Decision’”, Frank Bruni, NY Times, December 21, 2016.
<http://nyti.ms/2i95tX1>
- “Early Applications Should be More Passion Than Strategy”, Willard Dix, Forbes, October 31, 2017
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/willarddix/2017/10/31/early-applications-should-be-more-passion-than-strategy/-51a00295a59f>
- “What Colleges Want in an Applicant (Everything)”, Eric Hoover, NY Times, November 1, 2017.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/01/education/life/what-college-admissions-wants.html>
- The Early Admissions Game: Joining the Elite, with a New Chapter. Christopher Avery, Andrew Fairbanks and Richard Zeckhauser, Harvard University Press, 2004
- “Applying Early Decision: 5 Good (& 4 Bad) Reasons to Do It”, Winnie Ma, October 15, 2013.
<http://www.hercampus.com/high-school/applying-early-decision-5-good-4-bad-reasons-do-it?page=2>

Additional Resources

2017 State of College Admissions Report.
National Association for College Admissions
Counseling.

[https://www.nacacnet.org/news--publications/
publications/state-of-college-admission/](https://www.nacacnet.org/news--publications/publications/state-of-college-admission/)

Thank you for coming!

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