
Race in College Admissions: What's next for school leaders

In June 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled to significantly limit the use of race in college admissions. The consideration of race as a status or category is no longer permitted. Colleges are evaluating policies and considering what adjustments to make to comply with the ruling. This document for school stakeholders can help your students determine what steps to take on their journey to college.

Context for this Resource

College Board is collaborating with our partners in higher education to find ways to achieve their goals and deliver on their commitment to building more diverse classes consistent with the law. We're also working with K–12 leaders and counselors to strengthen their efforts to advise and support students and families.

We welcome your partnership as we continue to develop additional K–12 information and resources to help you in your work with families. [Learn more at <https://higher.collegeboard.org/recruitment-admissions/policies-research/access-diversity/2023-scotus-decision>](https://higher.collegeboard.org/recruitment-admissions/policies-research/access-diversity/2023-scotus-decision)

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Summary and Implications of the Supreme Court Ruling

- In June 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the consideration of race as status in admissions decision making is no longer permissible.
- Admissions offices may continue to ask about and consider a student's skills, knowledge, and character qualities associated with their lived experiences (e.g., essays, short-answer questions).
- The court didn't limit the consideration of:
 - First-generation status.
 - Socioeconomic status (SES).
 - Geography and other contextual factors.
- The court also didn't specifically address recruitment and outreach, pipeline and pathway programs, or scholarships and financial aid.
- Implications for admissions offices include adjusting policies and processes to comply with the law, ensuring staff are sufficiently trained to understand and implement the changes, and communicating admissions policies to students, families, and counselors.
- Although admissions offices need to make key decisions in the short term, responding to this ruling will require a long-term strategy to be both effective and durable.

Key Actions for School Counselors

Research

- Search college websites for admissions policies and updates to assist in advising your students.
- Review additional sources on this topic to educate yourself about the implications for admissions, financial aid, and scholarships.

Engage

- Educate teachers and colleagues to be sure they're clear about admissions policies (e.g., letters of recommendation, essays)
- Invite and host school and campus visits to expose students to various institutions.
- Cultivate and deepen relationships with institutions for timely updates, insights, and shared understanding.

Dialogue

- Educate students and parents to ensure that they're accurately informed and prepared to support the process.
- Reassure families of their value to higher education. Encourage students to remain on their path to college.
- Continue the conversation with admissions and enrollment leaders as we continue to navigate this new landscape.

What Counselors can say to Students

Key Talking Points

- You may not know if college is right for you now or later, but you belong in college. It's your choice whether to go or not. To make the choice easier for you later, we'll make sure you're prepared to go.
- Know that colleges and universities are looking for ways to admit students, not deny them.
- Explore careers you might be interested in. Colleges can help you set career goals and better understand what it takes to get there.

Statements of support

- Don't forget that institutions value diversity and want students from diverse backgrounds on their campuses.
- As your counselor, I'll continue to spotlight your talents, knowledge, skills, and character.

What students can do

- Talk about your full, authentic self in the admissions process; self-advocacy is important.
- When writing your essay or personal statement, vividly tell your story. Showcase your character qualities and leadership skills. When writing about your identity, remember it is an asset, not a disadvantage. Your story can celebrate that.
- Identify your interests. Then explore them by joining clubs or after school programs. Reflect on what you enjoy the most and why.
- Ask your teachers how you're doing in school and what can you do better. Ask your parents or family members to talk to your teachers about what's going well and what's not.
- Read for fun. It will help build literacy skills outside of class.
- Attend class. Students who attend class are more likely to succeed academically and socially.

What College and Universities Want Counselors to Know

- Colleges and universities continue to value diversity and want your students on campus.
- Letters of recommendation that highlight your student's knowledge, talents, skills, and character qualities are important, especially considering the Court's ruling.
- Students can and should continue to present their complete experience in the college application. Counselors should encourage them to do so.
- Colleges and universities will continue their efforts to reach all students from diverse backgrounds.
- Preliminary resources show that standardized assessments like the SAT® or ACT® help predict academic success for students in college.
- At some colleges and universities, test scores may allow students to place out of entry-level math or English courses, saving them money in credits. Test scores can help students earn scholarships for college. While many colleges no longer require test scores for admission, they may find them useful for identifying students for scholarships
- When students apply with AP® classes or other rigorous coursework, they're showing that they're prepared to take college level courses. That's because they've already been exposed to a higher-level class structure and expectations.

What K–12 District Leaders can say to their School Staff

There are many pathways to success after high school. Not all students may want to or need to go to college or university depending on their postsecondary choice, but it's important that students know they have the option. You can get this message across by doing the following:

- Create intentional spaces for students to explore what life after high school can look like.
- Help parents and families understand what supports are available for their students when it comes to postsecondary choices. Regardless of what grade their student is in, you can help them begin preparing for their future.
- Connect the importance of attending class and being prepared for class with the skills needed in college and career. Help students develop good habits, such as being punctual, organized, and working well with others.
- Encourage your students to explore their passions and interests, whether that's taking an elective course, a different type of history class, joining clubs at schools, or volunteering in their community after school. Then ask the student about those experiences and their favorite subjects in school.
- Provide access to college visits. Help your students prepare for those visits by making a list of questions an interviewer might ask them and vice versa. Then follow up with the students and their families to see what they thought about those colleges.

Planning Guide – Discussion Prompts

For superintendents:

- When helping students plan for life after high school, what reliable systems do you have in place for them and their families?
 - Do they have a clear understanding of the college recruitment, admissions, and financial aid processes?
 - Do they have career awareness?
 - Do they have an opportunity to explore career interests and then identify the education and skills required for these fields?
- When helping students plan for life after high school, how do you ensure they all have access to the most rigorous coursework available?
 - Do all students have an opportunity to take the most rigorous courses?
 - What processes are in place for students to access courses that connect them to their interests and passions?
 - Are there enough courses and sections of courses for students to pursue more rigorous coursework options? (e.g., IB, AP, dual enrollments)
 - Are there gatekeeping measures for students to enroll in certain classes (e.g., Lexile level, prerequisite course, AP Potential™). If so, why are they necessary?
- What ways do you use standardized assessments (state test, ACT, SAT, PSAT-related assessments) to help inform instructional practice, inform student programming, and guide the college search process?
- What are the demographics of your district? Are those same demographics reflected in higher-level courses?

For principals:

- When developing a master schedule, how are you guaranteeing students have multiple pathways and multiple access points to rigorous coursework?
- When does college and career planning start in your school? Do all students have the same access to it? What are your staff expectations of this messaging?
- What local colleges, universities, or trade schools are nearby? Are there partnership opportunities to bring them into your school community?
- How do you review your students' progress and outcomes so they receive regular feedback on academic skills and on socio-emotional skills? If this isn't a regular practice, what's holding you back?

For counselors:

- How are you supporting all students on your caseload to be certain they have options after high school, whether that's college, university, technical school, or something else?
- In what ways are you informing parents and families about options available in the future?

- What core skills do you want all students to keep track of when they're in high school? How do you message that?
- What support do you need from your building's educators and administrators to be sure students hear a common message about your students' ability to pursue multiple educational and career options after high school?

How College Board Programs and Services Can Help

- AP courses, dual enrollment, and IB courses allow students to show colleges that they're excited about rigorous coursework, have experience in a different type of classroom setting, and can increase affordability of college.
- Taking the PSAT™ 10 or PSAT/NMSQT® in 10th grade allows colleges to see students earlier in the application process and helps students who may not see themselves as college-going or college-bound to potentially shift their perception.
- Score reports for the SAT Suite of Assessments include score interpretation resources for educators to help students focus on improving their skills and knowledge. And it helps educators see the skill gaps that a student has that they can incorporate into their lesson plans.
- While taking AP courses is associated with stronger college outcomes, the biggest boost to a student's post-secondary trajectory comes from taking just one AP course. Students who earn scores of 1 and 2 are more likely to enroll in a 4-year college than academically similar peers who didn't take AP Exams in high school. Give students access and the opportunity to take rigorous coursework and take AP classes.
 - Not sure which course to enroll them in? Start with one of our access courses – AP Precalculus, AP Seminar or AP Computer Science Principles. The right AP classes at the right time can open college and career opportunities. Research shows that students who take AP Seminar were shown to outperform non-AP students in their first-year college GPA and have a higher likelihood of attending college than their non-AP peers.
- As educators, PSAT-related assessments and linkage to AP Potential can help give students more access and more visibility. It can also help you work with students on the core skills they need to be successful.
- It's never too early to start planning. BigFuture® is a free resource that helps students explore careers, plan for college, and pay for college.
- College Board National Recognition Program are a tangible way to help top-performing, underrepresented students be seen by colleges and support colleges' recruitment strategies. The programs serve as a signal to colleges and universities. All colleges and organizations using College Board's Student Search Service™ can connect with students who are in Student Search Service and have been recognized by the National Recognition Programs as part of their

recruitment plan. Qualifying students starting in 10th grade can apply on BigFuture to confirm they meet the academic criteria and belong to one or more communities that the programs recognize.

Appendix

Sample Essay Excerpt

“We usually watched the Broncos game or a college lacrosse game together on the weekends after dance practice. While bombarding him with question after question, he politely reminded me that we were watching a game. I tried to settle down and began to trace the outline of one of his two tattoos. It was a Native American chief with two lacrosse sticks forming an ‘X’ behind the portrait. As a child, I thought that was the scariest tattoo ever put onto someone’s skin.”

“Growing up, the idea of college was one that was never truly an option for me. It was always a given. When your parents had to uproot their lives and move to the U.S., saying you don’t want to go to college is considered not appreciating their sacrifice. It sounds absurd, I know. In my family though, there was never an age limit when it comes to thinking about college and the future.”

“I felt like an outsider, having different interests from my Black peers with my love for anime and K-pop, alongside a complete lack of fashion sense. My attire often consisted of purple jeggings that my mother bought for me in the sixth grade that still happened to fit. I’d been told I “talked white” due to my complete pronunciation and distinct Baltimore County accent, which stood apart from that of Baltimore City. I experienced a growing disconnect between my understanding of my own blackness and the preconceived notions held by others.”

“As my father stood on the precipice of his own educational journey, the only offering my grandmother could grant him was a mantra deeply etched into her own experience—‘fanya bidii,’ she would say—translated to ‘work hard’ in English. As I grow up and reflect on the ways in which this simple message has shaped my father’s life, I increasingly understand that it was far more valuable than any textbook or handful of cash.”