

What is MyBestCollege?

Choosing a college can be overwhelming. There are more than 2,600 four-year colleges and universities in the United States, and most high school students are familiar with only a small fraction of them.

The challenge is even greater for students in Hawai'i. Visiting colleges on the mainland takes considerable time and expense, making it difficult for students to experience enough different schools to understand what type of college environment might actually fit them best.

MyBestCollege was created to help students answer a different question:

What kind of college would be best for me?

Rather than beginning with college rankings, name recognition, admissions statistics, or the schools that friends are talking about, MyBestCollege begins with the student.

What Does MyBestCollege Measure?

Students complete a 37-question survey designed to identify their preferences across nine dimensions of the college experience:

- School Size
- Location
- Culture
- Curriculum
- Weather
- Buildings & Campus Environment
- Residential Life
- Diversity
- Course & Subject Interests

The goal is not to identify one "perfect" college. It is to help students better understand what characteristics of a college are likely to matter most to them and then discover schools that fit that profile—including colleges they may never have considered.

How to Complete the Survey (5 easy steps)

1. Have your student begin at MyBestCollege.com

The student should answer the questions based on what they genuinely want from their college experience, not what they think their parents, friends, teachers, or college counselors would want them to say.

There are no "right" answers.

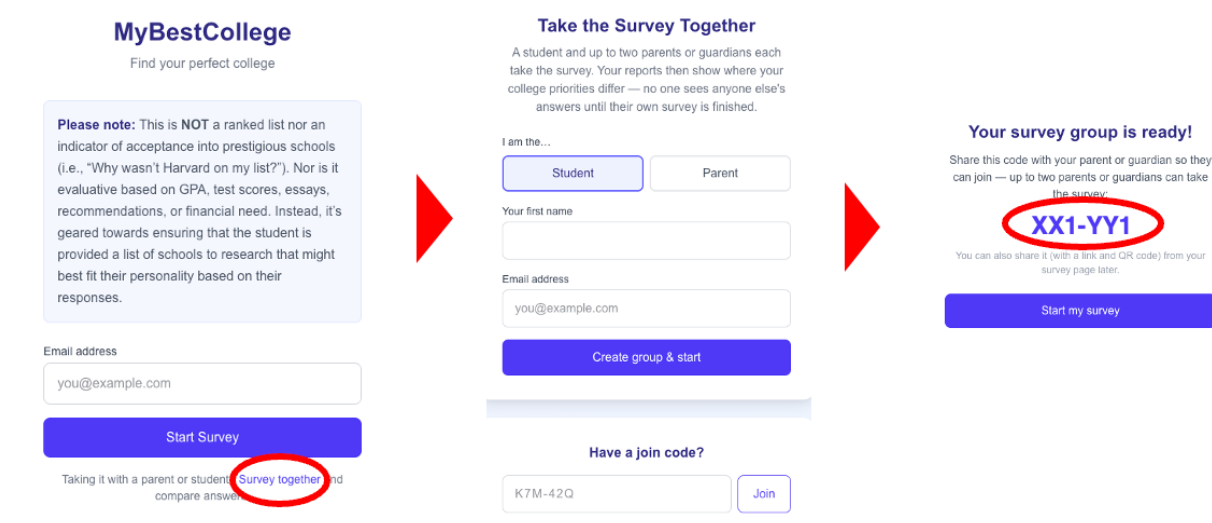
Encourage them not to overthink the questions. Their first instinct is often useful.

2. Parents can take the survey too

One of the most interesting parts of the process is comparing:

What the student says they want with what their parents think they want.

To do this, select "Survey together" on the opening page. The student will receive a join code that each parent can enter under "Have a join code?"



Parents should answer the questions independently, based on how they believe their child will respond.

Don't compare answers until everyone has finished!

The differences can lead to some surprisingly helpful conversations.

3. Complete the optional "Thought Experiments"

At the end of the survey, students can answer three open-ended questions designed to reveal interests that may not be captured by a scored survey.

For example:

You're locked in a room and given a choice: solve 100 physics problems or write a short story. Which would you choose—and why?

This isn't really about physics or creative writing. It helps us understand whether a student might naturally gravitate toward a more technical/STEM-oriented environment or toward a broader liberal arts experience.

Students are also asked about their favorite high school classes and what subject they would most enjoy teaching. These questions help uncover subjects, interests, and possible academic directions worth exploring.

The "why" is often more important than the answer itself.

What Happens Next?

4. Review the student's Ideal College Profile

MyBestCollege uses the survey responses to generate an Ideal College Profile describing the kind of college environment that appears to fit the student.

Please read this profile carefully.

The student can edit it if something doesn't feel right. The goal is for the student to be able to read the profile and say:

"Yes, that sounds like the kind of college experience I'm looking for."

5. Explore the college matches

Once the profile is finalized, MyBestCollege uses AI and information from reputable college resources to identify approximately 25 colleges that may fit the student's preferences.

This is where the real exploration begins.

The list is not intended to tell a student where they should attend or even necessarily where they should apply. Instead, it provides a starting point for research.

We hope students discover several schools that make them say:

"I've never thought about that college before. I want to learn more about it."

What MyBestCollege Does — and Doesn't — Do

MyBestCollege is designed primarily as a college-fit and discovery tool.

It does not currently calculate a student's likelihood of admission based on GPA, test scores, extracurricular activities, essays, recommendations, or other application factors.

It also does not currently incorporate financial aid or affordability into its matching process.

Those are critically important parts of building a final college list and should be considered with your student's college counselor and family.

Think of MyBestCollege as helping answer: "What colleges might fit me?"

rather than: "What colleges will admit me?"

Those are two different, and equally important, questions.

Why We Created This

MyBestCollege grew out of my own experience helping my son navigate the college search.

We visited more than 20 colleges across the East and West Coasts and spent countless hours with resources such as the Fiske Guide to Colleges, Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges, and online college-search tools. There was an enormous amount of information available, but I kept coming back to one problem:

How does an 18-year-old know what they're actually looking for?

The college search often begins with familiar names, rankings, admissions statistics, sports teams, or what friends are considering. We wanted to turn that process around.

Start with the student. Understand what matters to them. Then find colleges that fit.

That's the idea behind MyBestCollege.

And We Need Your Help

MyBestCollege is still in its early stages. We've begun testing it with students and their parents, and their feedback is helping us improve both the questions and the matching process.

Our goal is to develop MyBestCollege into a free or very low-cost resource that can make thoughtful college exploration accessible to more families—beginning here in Hawai'i and eventually beyond.

After you and your student complete the process, we would love to hear what worked, what didn't, what surprised you, and how we can make it better.

Most importantly, we hope the process sparks a meaningful conversation between students and their parents about something deeper than "Where should I apply?"

What kind of place will help me learn, grow, belong, and thrive for the next four years?

Mahalo.