



DIY College Rankings: Where to Start

As I went through the college search process with my son, I was constantly amazed at the way numbers are and are not used in the process. Everyone talks about student's GPA, class rank, and test scores and college acceptance rates but no one seemed to know anything about their Expected Financial Contribution (EFC), four-year college graduation rates, or percentage of students receiving non-federal student loans.

So this blog is about numbers and why you might use them and when you might ignore them. It's about keeping perspective so that families can find the best colleges that meet their needs. If you're just starting the search the process, the following posts will help provide perspective as you start to wade deeper into the college search and admissions frenzy.

[What is EFC? The Start of Your College Search](#)

Unless you are able and willing to pay the full sticker price for college, you need to understand EFC.

[5 Financial Aid Strategies Parents of Juniors Need to Know Before the Spring Semester](#)

The five I cover in this post can potentially make a significant difference in how much you pay for college. And if you don't take advantage of them by January of the junior year, it's too late.

[5 Things to Know About Paying for College Before You Apply](#)

Not all colleges cost the same. Ultimately, you can't go to colleges with better financial aid awards if you don't apply to them.

[College Scholarships: Where to Look](#)

This explains why students are told to never rule out private colleges.

[How to Find Merit Scholarships: Follow the Money](#)

Learn how to identify which colleges are most likely to provide merit scholarships.

[Why YOU Should Care About College Graduation Rates](#)

College graduation rates matter. Some schools do a much better job making sure their students graduate than others. The most expensive degree is the one you never complete.

[College Search Resources](#)

I've created a variety of resources newsletter subscribers can download including a listing of Best Free Resources for Finding and Paying for College and a Financial Aid Timeline. Subscribers have access to all of the resources through the newsletter.

[Creating College Lists 101](#)

This is a series of posts explaining how to download the spreadsheet and complete some of the most common tasks.

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