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## Students' decision on college due now: Here's some advice

By [Janel Davis](#), The Atlanta Journal-Constitution | April 29, 2016



With college decision day looming, the AJC talked with Eric Greenberg, educational services expert and founder of the Greenberg Educational Group, about what parents and students should know about this important day.

**Q: What should parents and students be doing at this point, late in the college-decision season?**

**A:** At this point students should speak to other students who attend the school – they typically only rely on a school visit, or info session, but at the last minute, speaking to students there and asking them how the expectations are similar or different from the actual experience for an actual feet-on-the-ground perspective ... Look within the college advisement office for students from their high school who may have gone to that college. If that's not possible, read up online anything and everything that students are saying about the school. If you read enough, you get a fairly reliable consensus of what's going on.

**Q: What should parents know about financial aid at this point?**

**A:** The deposit that is required is a small portion of overall tuition. Even if financial aid offers haven't been made yet, sometimes the family will pay that themselves. The presumption with any financial aid that is pending or any financial aid statement that is being appealed, families should take the conservative approach and assume that no other financial aid should come

through. They should commit to the school they are most comfortable with under those

financial circumstances, so if more money does come through they can consider it “found money.”

**Q: What to do if you haven’t heard from a college?**

**A:** Some schools do admit until the time classes start, but if you haven’t heard from a couple of schools but have heard from others, at this point, you should commit to one. Families should take the best option that they have now.

**Q: Can you change your mind later on a school you’ve accepted by the May 1 deadline?**

**A:** Colleges do not typically allow students to enroll in more than one school at a time, so they would have to revoke the acceptance for the May 1 school and then put a deposit down for the other school. But a student has to be prepared for losing the deposit. Some schools might consider refunding the deposit, but with most schools the deposit is nonrefundable. The overall issue is you can only hold one accepted spot at a time. Families have to re-evaluate at each step, consider the trade-offs between the cost and desirability factor that is comfortable on both sides.

**Q: How do you know what school is best for your student?**

**A:** If a student has visited a school and say they could see themselves there, the emotional litmus test is a great way to measure that. Also the long-run issues: cost factor, ROI (return on investment), is the school in a pre-professional program where job opportunities may be greater, etc. So it’s about an emotional feel and the future feel.

If a student hasn’t visited a school, and if they can’t find a current student to talk to, most important is to read as much as possible about the school. If a family has not seen a school, they may reach out and ask for a brief extension to the May 1 deadline to allow them time to visit the school and make a more insightful decision.

**Q: What happens next, after the May 1 deadline?**

**A:** If a student is wait-listed at another school that appeals to them, there are still things a student can do: make another school visit to show interest, sit in on a class to get better feel, write a letter to the admissions office and express why the school is very appealing. For students who have made their decision by May 1: Issues involving housing and class selection are usually next. The best way to get through this is speaking with students who are currently there (along with the advising dean/counselor/etc.). For housing we recommend speaking with

students. For parents: Often parents are consumed with how they will deal with having the student being away from home for first time. Parents also then begin to see the real cost of college: add-ons like travel to and from home, meal costs higher than the meal plan, extra supplies, etc.

**Q: How did May 1 come to be the deadline that it is?**

**A:** Not every school agrees on this. Some policies say a student cannot accept more than one offer, etc. May 1 tends to be a historical date in which many colleges agree that they want to hear by so that the process of bringing in the freshman class doesn't encompass the whole summer. With a May 1 deadline they can have virtually all of the bureaucracy finished by the end of May, so they can get on with the planning process.