Recruiting in an Era of
Channel Overload

How to Optimize Your Audience Strategy
to Achieve Enrollment Success

Marketing and Enrollment Solutions | Enroll360

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Introduction:

Rebuilding a Fragmented Audience

Anticipating the Hypercompetitive Higher Ed Markets of Tomorrow

A shrinking universe

It's no secret that the universe of college-bound students is set to shrink in coming years. Several factors, including a contraction in the overall number of high school students nationally, changes in their demographic composition, and drops in the college-going rate, promise to reduce demand for higher education by between 5% and 11% by 2030.

A zero-sum game

Less widely discussed is the extent to which colleges vary in their ability to field challenges such as these, even within school segments.

A close examination of enrollment outcomes for the nation's colleges and universities from 2008 to 2018 shows that demographic trends had far less of an impact on enrollment than did shifts in market share. In other words, schools that continued to grow did so by claiming a larger slice of the overall enrollment pie.

Projected Change in Demand, 2025–2030

By College/University Segment[1]

Elite	National	Regional
Top 50 colleges[1]	Top 50–100 colleges[1]	Outside of top 100[1]
-5%	-8%	-11%
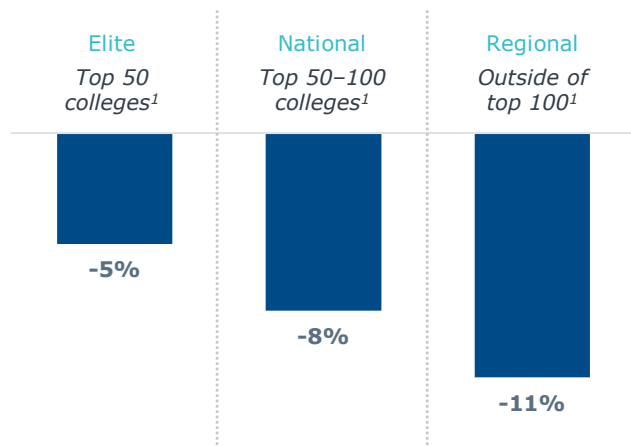
1) Segments are based on USNWR rankings.

Impact of Demographics vs. Market Share

Based on Nationwide Trends from 2008 to 2018

How much of colleges' change in enrollment was impacted by the following two factors?

Demographic changes	Shifts in market share
37%	63%
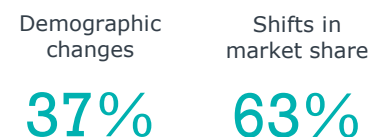
Sources: Grawe, Nathan D., *The Agile College: How Institutions Successfully Navigate Demographic Changes*, 2021; IPEDS Fall Enrollment Data – First-time Freshmen by Residence, EAB interviews and analysis.

Looking Beyond the Low-Hanging Fruit

A primary audience

Most colleges and universities can readily identify a group of students in their primary market with a higher likelihood to apply and enroll relative to the general population of college-goers.

In times when students were plentiful and competition over them was less intense, focusing recruitment efforts on this subset made sense—it was an efficient approach that, even if it did not break enrollment records, would often deliver the required headcount.

Imperative to cast a wider net

Now, as the overall population of college goers is shrinking, so is the subset of high-intent students. Consequently, focusing your recruitment efforts primarily on this group will not get you the numbers you need.

Instead, you'll need to engage the broader set of candidates in your primary market and beyond—students who match the profile you're looking for but are not the obvious sure thing that the populations you've historically focused on may have been.

You'll Increasingly Need to Engage More "Difficult" Audiences

Total Freshman Enrollment Versus Number of Students Marketed To

Students with high likelihood to enroll ⟷ Everyone else

Freshman enrollment

A shrinking universe of college-bound students means you'll need this "extra" enrollment just to hit your current numbers

Number of prospective students marketed to
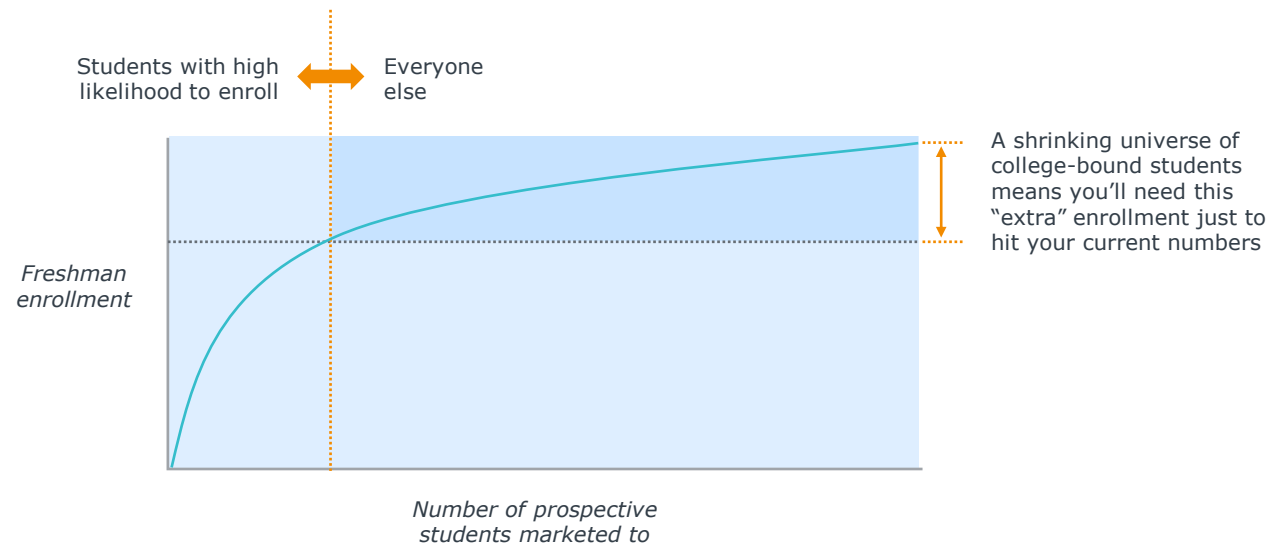
Source: EAB research and analysis.

Harder Than Ever to Know How to Reach Prospects

Volume x conversion

Many schools are successfully compensating for declines in college-going demographics by doing a better job of identifying prospects within that shrinking universe—a goal that is readily achieved by way of audience-sourcing best practices.

But to thrive in the face of decreasing demand, they will also need to do a better job of converting their prospects into applicants and enrollments.

A fragmenting audience

That task is complicated by the ongoing explosion of Internet media, which is giving students countless new ways to learn about and engage with colleges they are considering.

The resulting picture is one of students engaging in increasingly complex and idiosyncratic search patterns and being spread more thinly across a growing array of channels. Related challenges faced by enrollment leaders include that of understanding which recruitment marketing channels should be included in their overall mix.

Students' Search Process Is Increasingly Complex and Idiosyncratic

Student Interaction with Information Sources, by High School Year; Representative Hypothetical Students

Source: EAB research and analysis.

eab.com
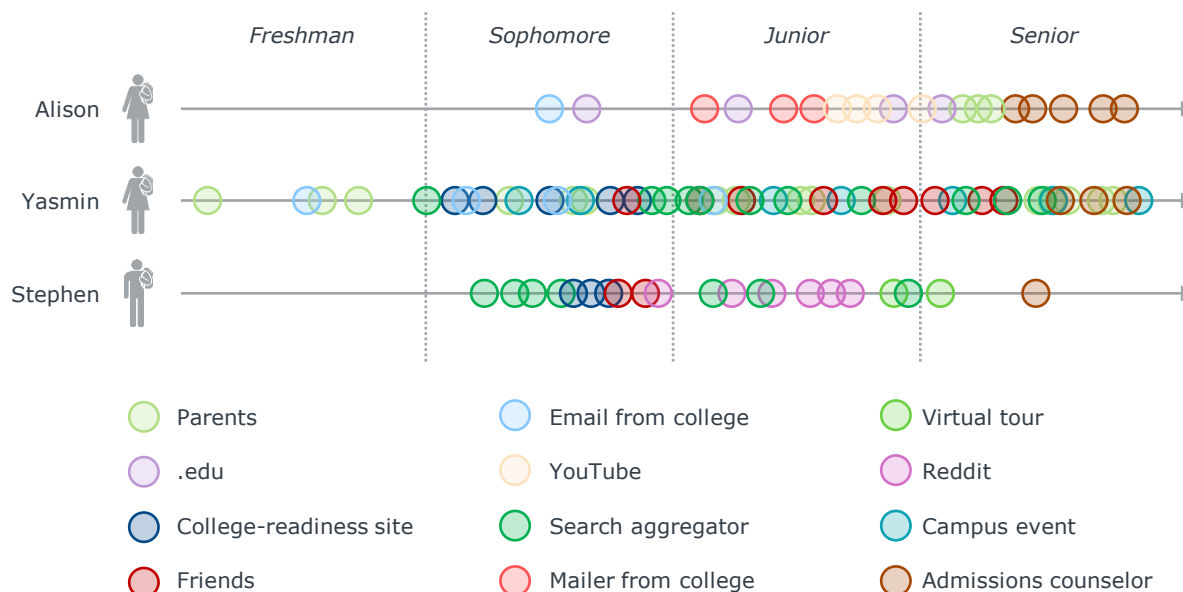
Overwhelmed by Channel Proliferation

An expanding channel spectrum

High schoolers' increasingly varied search patterns are driven, in part, by a proliferation of online content and information sources purpose-built for college-bound students, from search-aggregator sites to ones hosting campus tour videos produced by students.

Daunting complexity

This evolving landscape is formidable in its complexity. Unfortunately, it is also something you cannot afford to ignore; many of these same channels represent important potential audience sources and influence channels for recruitment marketing efforts.

Given the very real possibility of future declines in standardized testing, you will need new ways to find students to recruit. And, given the fragmentation of your audience across a growing range of engagement platforms, you'll need to stay on top of which channels are favored by the largest numbers of students, what if any options each channel offers you for influencing students, and how the audiences and capabilities offered by these channels fit together.

Some of the Many Audience Data Sources and Influence Channels Available to Enrollment Leaders

Unigo • CollegeReel • College Confidential • MyMajors • Chegg • College Simply

TikTok • Plexuss • RaiseMe • Intersect • ZeeMee • NRCCUA • AP • Zinch

FastWeb • Going Merry • Camino • Cappex • BigFuture • Infinite Scholars • Peterson's

MyMozaic • CLT • CBSS • College Factual • Amerilist • College Raptor • PSAT

QuestBridge • IvyWise • PrepScholar • Niche • College Board • College Navigator

VP of Enrollment Management

Source: EAB research and analysis.

A Portfolio Perspective

An EAB channel suite

This white paper is intended to help enrollment leaders make sense of the increasingly complex landscape of recruitment marketing audience sources and conversion channels available to them.

It does so with specific reference to EAB's own channel suite and with a particular focus on the newest additions to it: Cappex, Intersect, YouVisit, and Wisr.

Generalizable lessons

While the focus of this report is on EAB channels, lessons covered in it also apply in a more general way to the challenge of assembling a comprehensive and complementary set of audience sourcing and conversion tools.

While we believe EAB has put together an array of channels that represent the best of their kind, and that their integration within EAB makes for a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, other serviceable channel combinations are undoubtedly possible. This report aims to help no matter which selection you've settled on.

EAB's Array of Complementary Channels

Recruitment Marketing Tools Comprehensively Covering Key Enrollment Objectives

EAB direct marketing

cappex   **INTERSECT**

EAB college-website design services

YOU | VISIT   **wisr**

The pages that follow highlight EAB's newest channels

Unified audience sources offering complete national coverage of the full universe of college-bound students

+

An integrated suite of conversion channels that gives you ubiquitous presence in search settings that matter most to students

Source: EAB research and analysis.

eab.com
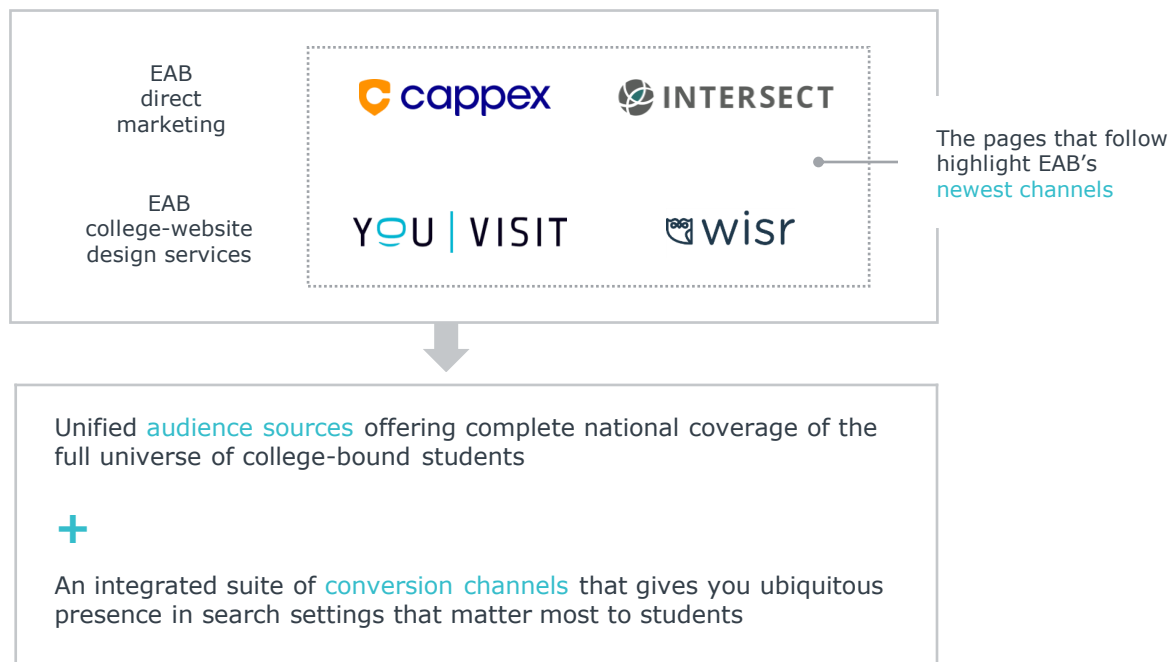
An Introduction to Cappex

An EAB channel overview

This page and the pages that follow offer an introduction to the four newest additions to EAB's recruitment marketing channel suite, which will be referenced throughout this report.

Cappex in brief

From a college's standpoint, Cappex is a source of names to feed into your recruitment-marketing efforts as well as a source of insight on students' level of interest in your institution. It is also, secondarily, a conversion platform, insofar as it offers options for influencing students, including promotional capabilities and customizable college profiles.

Cappex's power as a lead source stems, in part, from its enormous reach, which is, in turn, attributable to the valuable services it provides to college-bound students and the correspondingly high volume of traffic it sees.

Cappex also offers colleges access to a large additional set of student names coming from a network of affiliates that includes organizations such as Parchment.

In a Nutshell

Cappex is a source of both primary and qualified recruitment marketing leads, built on one of the nation's largest search-aggregator websites.

Highlights

Extensive reach

Between students sourced through its college-search website and names available through its network of affiliates, Cappex offers colleges access to approximately 40% of the nation's high school students.

Primary and qualified leads

Cappex offers its partner colleges both qualified and primary leads; qualified leads (AKA "Inquiries") are students who have indicated an interest in your institution, while primary leads (AKA "Candidates") are students who have not.

An equity lever

Cappex's College Greenlight division connects colleges with underserved students via its relationships with hundreds of community-based organizations (CBOs) nationwide.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

An Introduction to Intersect

Like Cappex…

Intersect, like Cappex, is a source of high-intent inquiries, and like Cappex, it serves a secondary but important role as a conversion platform, offering options for influencing students such as promotional tools and customizable college profiles.

…but complementary

That said, Intersect is distinct from Cappex in important ways.

Key differences include the foundation on which Intersect is built—namely, Naviance, a college and career readiness platform used by a large percentage of high school students nationwide—and the fact that it focuses specifically on high-intent inquiries from students. Intersect also differs somewhat from Cappex in its geographical and demographic coverage, which is complementary to that of Cappex.

These differences account for the primary role that Intersect plays in EAB's channel suite, i.e., that of a crucial source of actionable insight on prospective students, including academic ability and likelihood to apply and enroll at your institution.

In a Nutshell

Intersect connects with Naviance, a college and career readiness platform used by 10 million high school students nationally, to serve as a source of high-intent student inquiries.

Highlights

Hardwired into high schools

Naviance serves as a hub for college-search activity undertaken by students, parents, and high school counselors; its close integration with other high school systems and processes gives it a stickiness that few other platforms can match.

High-intent inquiries

A student's name becomes available to a college via Intersect only when a student explicitly indicates that they want to hear from that college—a fact that accounts for the extraordinarily high rate at which inquiries from Intersect convert to enrolls.

Options for influence

Intersect offers colleges optional features that boost the odds of students seeing their profile in Naviance; colleges also have extensive options for customizing information included in their school's Naviance profile.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

An Introduction to YouVisit Virtual Tours

A preeminent virtual-tours provider

YouVisit builds and manages virtual campus tours for colleges and universities.

Several important features distinguish YouVisit's tours from those available via other providers. One is the proprietary digital formats on which they are built, which layer different media types—still images, video, text, audio, and navigable 360 photo panoramas—into a seamlessly integrated whole.

A second feature is the ability to embed content of this type in non-tour settings on the .edu, e.g., for the purposes of showcasing a particular academic program or campus amenity.

A unique feature of YouVisit is its ability to benchmark tour performance across a large cohort of partner institutions—a capability that rapidly identifies opportunities to make schools' tours even more powerful and that lifts the overall level of performance across all tours by surfacing generalizable best practices.

In a Nutshell

YOU | VISIT

YouVisit creates virtual campus tours powered by advanced immersive digital media formats and offers a suite of wraparound services that maximize tour traffic and impact.

Highlights

UX rocket science

Digital-media innovation and user-experience innovation—core competencies of YouVisit—have enabled YouVisit teams to develop unique, proprietary formats proven to boost student engagement and downstream funnel conversion rates.

Uniquely impactful storytelling

YouVisit's proprietary digital-media formats enable forms of storytelling that are otherwise impossible, and benchmarking tour performance across 700 colleges gives YouVisit unique insight into which stories resonate best with students.

Unlocking potential in reach markets

Virtual tours have special appeal for students outside of your primary market and others who cannot easily make it to campus; related data from their interactions with your tour can pinpoint areas of potential in markets where other forms of outreach are difficult to scale.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

eab.com

An Introduction to Wisr Virtual Communities

School-owned social media

Wisr provides prospective students with an opportunity for structured interaction with other students who are considering your school and with members of your campus community, including current students and faculty. It does so by way of an online environment that replicates many features of commercial social networks yet avoids their pitfalls.

Built for recruitment

Much of the impact of Wisr is attributable to an extensive body of proprietary learning on how social networks optimize student recruitment—learning codified in Wisr's site design and in wraparound consulting and implementation services that are a standard feature of Wisr partnerships.

Related best practices developed by Wisr address questions such as these: how to jump-start the virtuous circle of user content creation and user engagement, which topic-specific groups are most likely to drive student activity, how that is best reflected in site architecture, and what various patterns of engagement tell you about students' likelihood to convert.

In a Nutshell

Wisr helps colleges design, build, and grow online social networks, aimed at cultivating relationships between prospective students and members of your campus community, including current students and faculty.

Highlights

School-owned social networks purpose-built for recruitment

Wisr sites recreate many of the best features of the dominant commercial social networks; however, being built specifically for student recruitment, they cut out the noise, distractions, and commercial intrusions students often encounter on other platforms.

Scalable personal interaction

Wisr implementations are built on best practices for scaling your campus community's activity on the site (including that of current students and faculty), which, in turn, ensures that prospective students have frequent, rich, and varied interactions with you.

Site architecture that mirrors student interests and your brand

Wisr sites are built around "communities"—portions of the site dedicated to topics proven by EAB research to be of urgent interest to prospective students and tailored to promote the unique strengths of your institution.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

eab.com

What This White Paper Does

A portfolio perspective

An optimized recruitment-marketing channel portfolio is one in which each channel brings something different to the table and in which that ecosystem of channels effectively promotes your enrollment goals, with minimal redundancy.

Reaching this state depends on having a clear sense of what, specifically, you are trying to achieve and how any given channel helps you do it. The structure of this white paper reflects that perspective.

As shown at right, this white paper focuses on three specific recruitment aims: finding students to recruit, providing actionable insight on students in your prospect pool, and moving students through the funnel. The bulk of the report is devoted to explaining how an optimized collection of audience sources and conversion channels promotes each of those aims, individually and in combination.

Mapping Audience Sources and Conversion Channels to Specific Recruitment Aims

This report explains the unique contribution that each of these sources and channels makes to advancing these aims

Audience sources and conversion channels

Direct marketing

List sources based on standardized testing and surveys

Cappex

Intersect

YouVisit

Wisr

.edu

How each helps you recruit students

1

Finding students to recruit

Corresponding white paper section

2

Providing actionable insight on students in your prospect pool

3

Moving students through the funnel

Source: EAB research and analysis.

eab.com
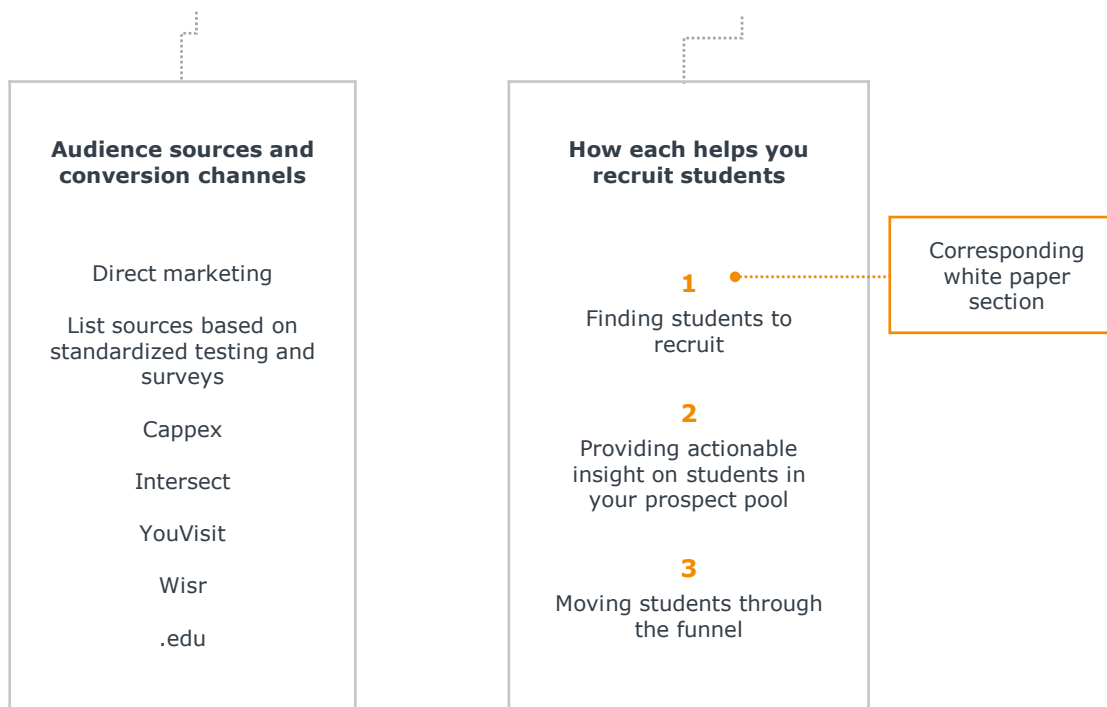
Understanding the Complementary Contributions of Your Channels

Multiple modes of action

One of the more challenging aspects of assembling an optimized portfolio of audience sources and conversion channels is that few, if any, contribute to your recruitment-marketing efforts in just one way; most advance several aims, and the trick lies in understanding each one's primary contribution relative to other channels.

The chart at right offers just such a perspective, showing how sources and channels most commonly used by EAB partners advance three specific recruitment-marketing aims. (Note that it includes non-EAB third-party list sources, such as PSAT, used in EAB direct-marketing campaigns).

While most of the listed resources contribute to two or more aims, most also have a particular strength that accounts for their presence in the mix. The next page, and the remainder of this report, unpack how the different modes of action of the different sources and channels work together as a coherent whole.

Roles Played by Major Audience Sources and Conversion Channels

White paper section

	1	2	3
	Finds students to recruit	Provides actionable insight on prospects	Moves students through the funnel
PSAT	✓✓✓	✓	-
NRCCUA	✓✓✓	✓	-
CBSS	✓✓✓	✓	-
Cappex Candidates	✓✓✓	✓	-
Cappex Inquiries	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Intersect	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
SAT	✓	✓✓✓	-
ACT	✓	✓✓✓	-
YouVisit	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Wisr	-	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
.edu	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓

Ratings of boxed items are based on their ability to deliver new, incremental volume over and above that available from core sources—PSAT, NRCCUA, CBSS, and Cappex Candidates.

Actionable insights include students' level of interest in your institution and their likelihood to succeed after enrolling.

Boxed channels are purpose-built for engaging students, with an eye to moving them from one funnel stage to the next.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

EAB's Optimized Recruitment Marketing Channel Portfolio

Primary Contributions of Each Audience Source and Conversion Channel Explained

EAB direct marketing
Cultivate, Apply, and Yield solutions

Direct marketing is the primary "at will" option in your recruitment-marketing toolkit, allowing you to initiate contact with students (via email, digital ads, etc.) versus waiting for them to seek you out.

It is your main way of establishing contact with a lot of students early in their college search. It also drives specific calls to action later in the process, including ones that refer students to your conversion-active channels and ones that invite them to inquire, visit, and apply.

EAB's direct-marketing programs are also a key conduit for actionable information on student academic ability, insofar as they incorporate name buys from standardized-testing sources, including the SAT and ACT.

Cappex
Candidates and Inquiries programs

The Cappex Candidates program is a crucial source of new audiences for your direct-marketing efforts (complementary to PSAT), including students in their early high school years. It will grow in importance if and when standardized testing volumes decrease.

The Cappex Inquiries program is a rich source of insight on students' level of interest in your institution—essential information for triaging high-intensity outreach, which drives conversions.

The Cappex website is also a conversion channel in its own right, insofar as it offers promotional capabilities, customizable school profiles, and call-to-action hosting.

YouVisit Virtual Tours

YouVisit drives conversions by offering students an experience with your campus that rivals (and, in some ways exceeds) that of in-person visits—which, survey research shows, play a very important part in students' ultimate choice of school.

Intersect

Like Cappex, Intersect is a rich source of insight on students' level of interest in your institution. Its coverage is complementary to that of Cappex, in terms of geography and student demographics, search styles, and communication preferences.

Naviance, on which Intersect draws, is also a conversion channel in its own right, by way of the promotional capabilities and customizable school profiles it offers.

Wisr Virtual Communities

Wisr drives conversions by providing a purpose-built space for structured social interactions between prospective students and members of your campus community. This meets several urgent student needs, including their desire to get a feel for what your school's people are like and getting peer opinions on key questions they have about your institution. A key capability Wisr unlocks for recruiting colleges is the ability to scale intensive personalized interaction with students in all funnel stages.

EAB college website transformation and design services

The .edu is the primary hub for your recruitment marketing efforts and a major referral destination for those efforts.

It helps convert students in two main ways: by hosting comprehensive "deep" content on those aspects of your institution that matter most to students (e.g., academic offerings) and by hosting calls to action for your other conversion-active channels.

Your website also plays a key role in generating insight on prospective students' level of interest in your school, as well as their needs, interests, and preferences.

Finally, it plays a secondary but significant role as an audience source, insofar as it draws students not yet in your prospect pool to it via organic search (a stream of traffic you can amplify via SEO).

Source: EAB research and analysis.

EAB

Section 1:

Finding Students to Recruit

Standardized Testing's Uncertain Future

Trouble at the core

For understandable reasons, most enrollment teams continue to rely on test-based list sources as their primary resource for finding students to recruit, evaluating admissibility, and determining aid award levels.

That said, various factors, including high-profile critiques of standardized testing's fairness and efficacy, are causing many to wonder how long this can last.

While only time will tell, enrollment leaders cannot afford the luxury of a wait-and-see approach; preparing for future enrollment cycles depends on having a working assumption about what is likely to happen. To formulate such an assumption, it is helpful to consider the various factors driving a move away from testing alongside those that give it continued relevance. A representative selection is shown at right.

Weighing these considerations, it is reasonable to suppose that the next five years will see a decrease in testing in the range of 10% to 30%.

Estimated Future Decrease in the Percentage of Students Taking Standardized Tests[1]

Scenarios by Level of Likelihood

0%	-10%	-20%	-30%	-40%	-50%	-60%	-70%

.... *Range of highest probability*

More likely ▮▮▮▮ Less likely
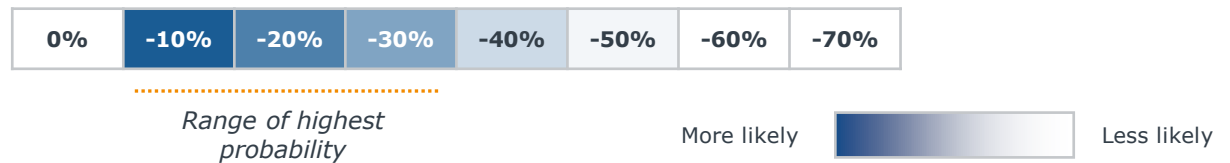
Factors driving a move away from testing	Factors helping to preserve testing
Evidence that testing inappropriately limits underserved students' access to higher education	Lack of GPA standardization across high schools and districts
Desire on the part of some students to avoid testing	Faculty resistance to test-free admissions assessment
Vast pandemic-era increase in the number of colleges adopting test-optional admissions	Unique efficacy of standardized testing for assessing preparedness for certain majors
Powerful precedents, such as the California system's test score ban	Role played by standardized test scores in states' assessment of school performance

Also: Existing multiyear contracts between states and testing agencies, the persistent belief on the part of some students that having test scores gives them a competitive advantage, the belief held by some that testing is more fair and less onerous for students than alternative methods of assessment, ongoing innovation on the part of the agencies that design and administer tests

1) Absolute decrease in percentage of college-bound students testing across the next five years, relative to pre-pandemic baseline.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

eab.com

Speculating on Test Sources' Shrinking Coverage

Names and numbers

On the preceding page, we speculated on a coming decrease in the number of students taking standardized tests. This page develops that line of thinking further, looking in more detail at how such trends may impact the number of names available to colleges and universities from the test-based list sources commonly used in recruitment marketing.

An increasingly invisible pool

The chart at right shows student names available via SAT and ACT testing as a proportion of total college-going high school graduates.

Note that this figure has never been 100%, as not all students have, historically, taken standardized tests and not all of those who did opted to have their information shared.

The bar at the far right of the chart shows what would happen if the percentage of students testing dropped to 75% from its pre-pandemic baseline of 95%. Under this scenario, information for around 60% of college-bound students would be available to recruiting schools.

What Percentage of College-Goers Are Available via SAT/ACT Testing?

First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen

Decrease in testers due to pandemic

Decrease in testers due to cultural shift away from testing

Legend:
- ☐ Do not test
- ☐ Test but opt out
- ■ Test and opt in

Only these students are available

Past	Present	Future
76%	68%	60%
Pre-pandemic era	*Pandemic era*	*Five years from now*
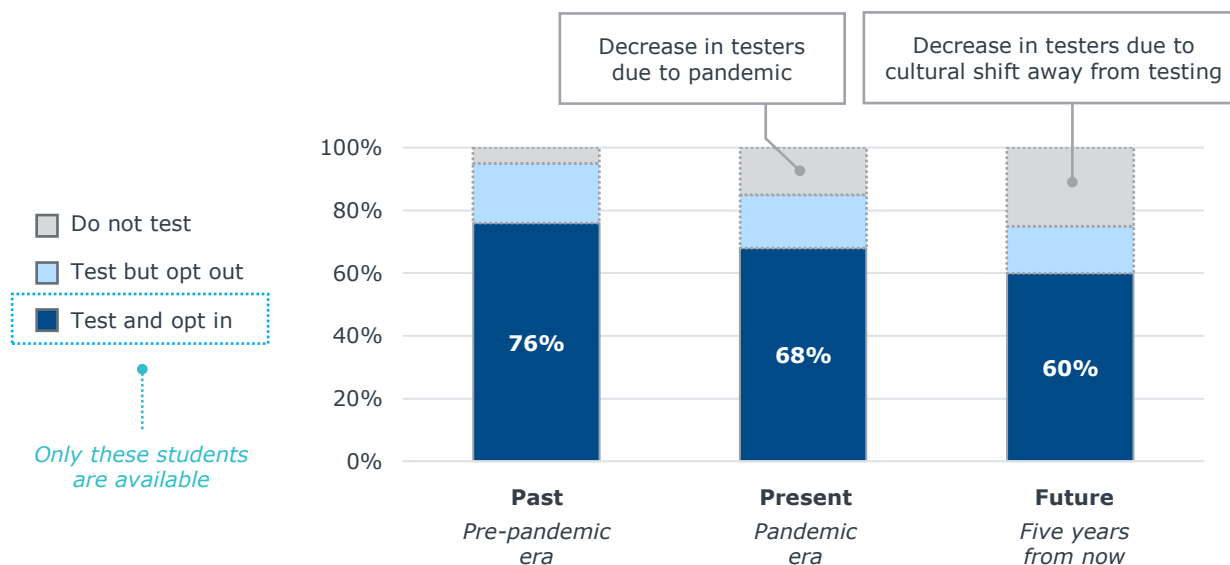
Mitigating factors

SAT and ACT testing is not the only way organizations that sponsor these tests acquire student names; students also enter College Board and Encoura data sets via PSAT and AP testing and non-assessment conduits, such as surveying.

These considerations, as well as College Board and Encoura's ongoing search for innovative means of engaging students, promise to lessen the negative impact of the testing trends described above on the number of student names available to enrollment teams.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Where Can Student Names Be Found?

Looking beyond testing

Given growing uncertainty about the future availability of student names from standardized-test sources, it is important to understand the full range of options for finding students to recruit.

Three main source categories

In broadest terms, the universe of audience sources contains three major categories: test-based sources, survey-based sources, and online platforms.

The first two categories are well established and familiar. The third encompasses a much broader and more diverse set of sources, including third-party college search aggregator platforms such as Cappex and colleges' own websites.

Since this third category encompasses the largest, most complex, and most rapidly changing set of sources, and because it is becoming more important as doubts about testing grow, much of what follows in this report will focus on sources that fall within that category.

An Overview of Major Audience-Source Types

Standardized testing
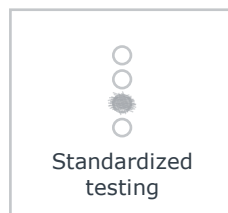
Lists from standardized tests such as the PSAT, SAT, and ACT form the core of most colleges' recruitment marketing lead-generation efforts, due to the number of names available, the detail and accuracy of information provided, availability relatively early in students' college search, and the standardized measure of academic ability they provide.

Survey sources

These sources represent survey data collected by organizations such as CBSS and NRCCUA. Because they are not tied to testing, they can sometimes provide broader and earlier coverage than test-based sources.

Online platforms
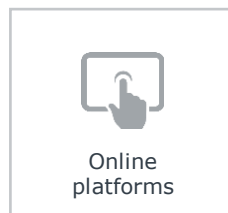
College-owned

This category includes the .edu and other college-owned digital channels, such as virtual campus tours.

Third-party

This category includes college search aggregator portals such as Cappex and a large number of other sites that seek to attract and engage students through a wide variety of other means.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Some Baseline Assumptions on Top-of-Funnel Approach

Assumed strategy

The advice given in this report assumes a particular approach to recruitment marketing—one that EAB considers to be best practice for most schools, based on long years of experience and research.

Because that approach has implications for where you should look for new students to recruit, this page offers some context.

Pursuing broad, early coverage

Most colleges can readily identify a subset of students in their primary market who have a higher likelihood to convert—a population that, in happier times, could provide schools with much of the enrollment they needed.

By contrast, today's contracting markets are requiring schools to identify all viable prospects in their markets and to start engaging with them as early as possible—an approach proven to boost conversion. That means schools must increasingly rely on sources that deliver more prospects earlier in their high school years, many of whom will not yet have demonstrated interest in your school and, more generally, do not yet have any specific ideas about colleges on which they might focus.

Two Defining Features of Optimized Student Recruitment

Comprehensive
You aim to identify all college-bound students in your primary market who meet your basic criteria for admission—not just those you are pretty sure will apply and enroll.

Early
You identify and engage college-bound students as early as possible in their high school career.

These objectives naturally translate into a focus on sources that provide "primary," AKA "unqualified" leads—students who have not yet expressed an interest in your institution.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

An Optimized List-Source Portfolio

A manageable selection

Typical schools can identify most of the universe of prospective students in their primary market using the relatively small and manageable set of sources shown at right, which, taken together, are complementary and comprehensive in their coverage.

Consistent with the approach described on the preceding page, this selection of sources provides broad coverage as early as possible in students' high school years.

Right tool for the right job

You should still use other sources as well—including ones tied to later standardized testing (SAT, ACT) and ones that focus on qualified leads (e.g., Intersect)—just not for the same reason. They are unlikely to identify a lot of new students over and above those whom the sources at right will already have provided, but they will give you crucial information on students' academic ability and level of interest in your institution.

A Source Combination That Offers Comprehensive and Early Coverage

PSAT	Delivers names for a large portion of the full universe of college-bound students, relatively early in their high school career, together with a preliminary read on their academic ability. Your primary source of names.
NRCCUA	Offers extensive and relatively early coverage of the full universe of college-bound students. Can be used to backfill PSAT gaps resulting from geographical variation, demographic blind spots, and potential future reductions in testing.
Cappex	Offers extensive and relatively early coverage via the Cappex Candidates program and gives you the option to de-duplicate relative to students already in your prospect pool.
CBSS	Offers extensive and relatively early coverage and gives you the option to de-duplicate relative to students already in your prospect pool.

What about...?

SAT and ACT lists

Use these sources for the crucial read they give you on students' academic ability. See Section 2 of this report.

List sources offering qualified leads

Use these sources for the actionable insight they give you into students' level of interest in your institution. See Section 2 of this report.

Names from some of these sources can be de-duplicated relative to earlier purchases from the sources above.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

The Special Case of Stealth Shoppers

Silent students

On the preceding pages, we focused on students who enter your recruitment pipeline via list sources. Alongside this population is an increasingly important group who remain anonymous during their college search.

These students are of interest for two reasons. First, they account for a full 25% of a typical school's applicants and an undetermined additional increment of prospects who considered you but ended up not applying. Second, as shown at right, advances in digital media are making it increasingly possible to reach and influence them before they apply to your school (or to a competitor).

Reaching stealth shoppers

Attaching a tracking script to students visiting your website or other online assets (e.g., virtual tour) enables you to subsequently follow them across the Internet, gathering data on their online activity and serving them digital ads, even as their identity remains unknown to you. Data gathered on these students can subsequently be used to customize additional forms of outreach to those among them who do end up identifying themselves.

Example: .edu Visit Triggers Tracking of and Outreach to Unidentified Prospects
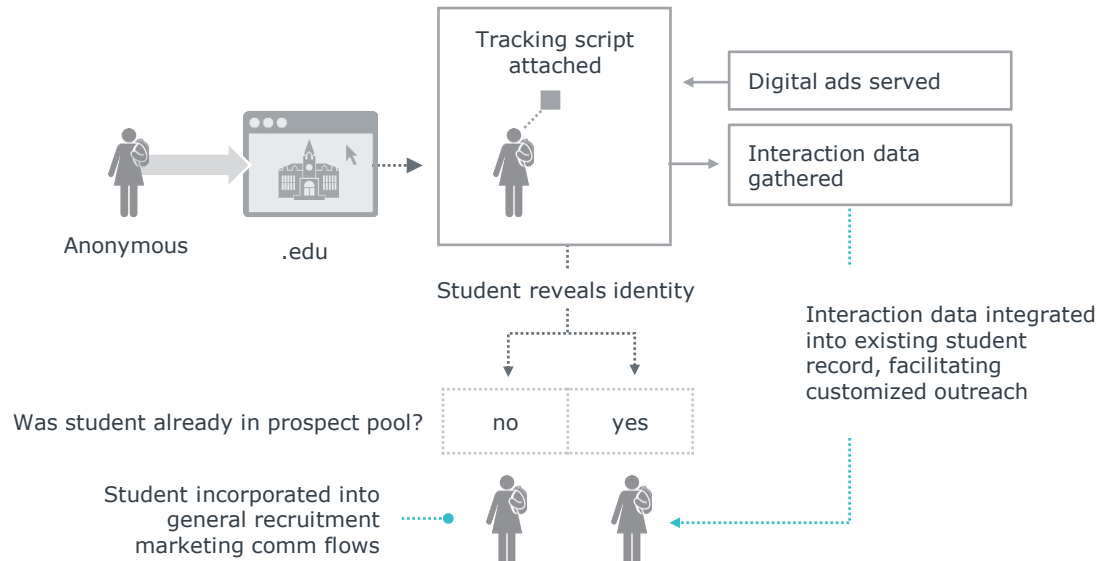
Source: EAB research and analysis.

More Options for Engaging Anonymous Audiences

Third-party options

As mentioned on the preceding page, tracking scripts are a flexible means of engaging anonymous students that may be used with any school-owned online asset.

Similar tools are available through a variety of third parties, including social networks and search-aggregator sites. For example, Facebook is able to identify and serve ads on your behalf to individuals within its enormous user base who match the type of students you're looking for.

EAB's early experience with this approach has shown it to be a highly effective means of reaching not only college-bound students but also their parents—a traditionally elusive audience. Furthermore, some social networks (though not Facebook) let you reach students as young as 13 years of age using this technique, opening up new opportunities for early engagement.

Third-Party Networks Promote Your School to Anonymous Students

User base of third-party network

(e.g., Facebook, Cappex, Naviance/Intersect)

Profile of desired students

match

promotion

promotion

promotion

Facebook identifies matches based on a model population you provide (e.g., previously admitted students).

Cappex and Intersect offer various matching options, including identifying students who have indicated an interest in schools like yours.

Your school is highlighted, via ads in the case of Facebook or via recommendations in the case of Cappex and Intersect.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Activating Reach Markets

Beyond your own backyard

The lessons on the preceding pages have, for the most part, focused on approaches best suited to a school's primary market. This page looks at how to identify new students to recruit in reach markets.

Pinpointing potential

The traditional challenge associated with reach markets is that response rates are often not high enough to justify the required recruitment marketing investment.

This is a situation where sources of qualified leads, such as Cappex Inquiries and Intersect Connections, and inbound channels, such as YouVisit and your .edu, take on special relevance. Because they can pinpoint students in remote markets who have demonstrated an interest in you, they also equip you to initiate outreach in a targeted and sustainable way, pursuing only those students likely to respond to your outreach and progress through the funnel.

The ad-based approaches shown on the previous two pages can be used in a similar way.

Finding Prospects Outside Your Primary Market

Inbound Channels and Sources of Qualified Leads Unlock New Potential in Reach Markets

Concentrations of activity reveal new geographical markets where you have untapped potential

Recruiting "ones and twos" from remote markets becomes financially feasible

Relevant sources and channels:

cappex   INTERSECT

YOU | VISIT   .edu
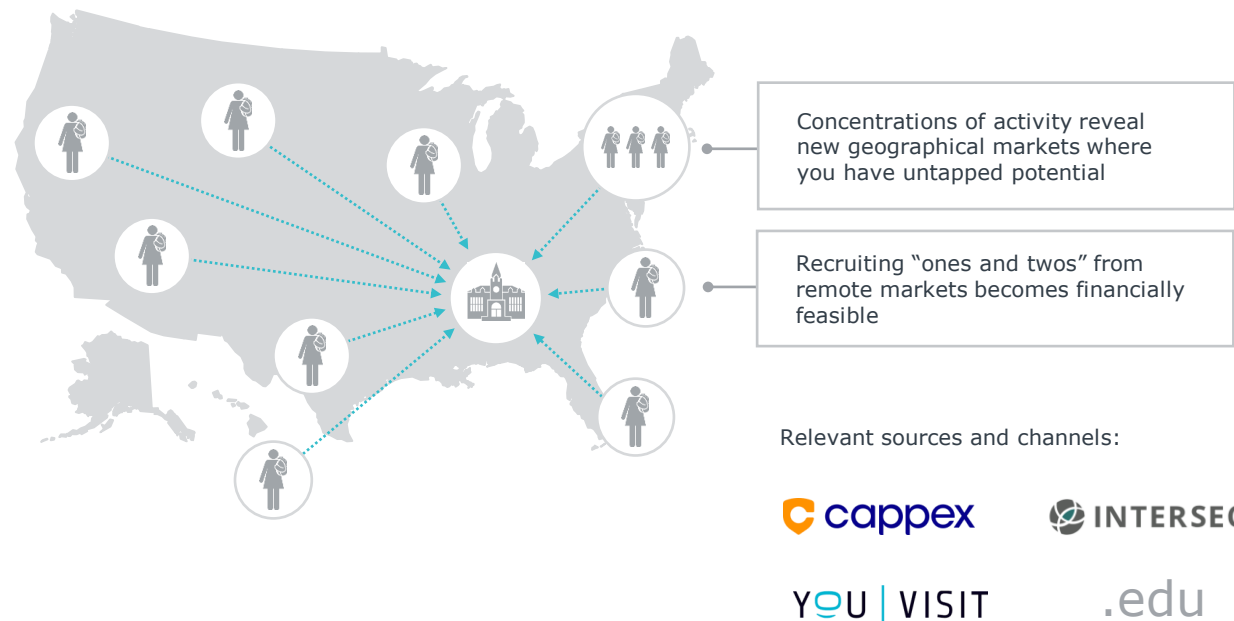
Source: EAB research and analysis.

New Sources Bring Complete Coverage Within Reach

Untapped potential

Using core list sources, colleges and universities could, in the past, identify most college-bound students.

That said, getting beyond around 80% coverage was historically difficult and expensive, depending, as it did, on extensive, redundant list source spend.

In the high-demand markets of the past, schools could safely ignore that last remaining increment of audience. Today, a shrinking universe of college-bound students and intensifying competition over them means you can no longer afford to ignore any pockets of latent potential.

Closing the gap

New audience-sourcing approaches, including those described on the preceding pages—tracking scripts, digital ad retargeting, and strategic partnerships with third-party brokers of student audiences, including social networks—bring the prospect of closing that gap into the realm of financial feasibility.

Lead-Acquisition Cost

Legacy Approaches Versus New Approaches

Effective range of core list sources

Incremental cost of identifying last 20% of prospect pool

$$$

$

Historically

Today

Cumulative lead-generation cost

A shrinking pool of college-bound students is forcing schools to identify and engage a larger proportion of them

Percentage of full prospect universe identified

Source: EAB research and analysis.

EAB
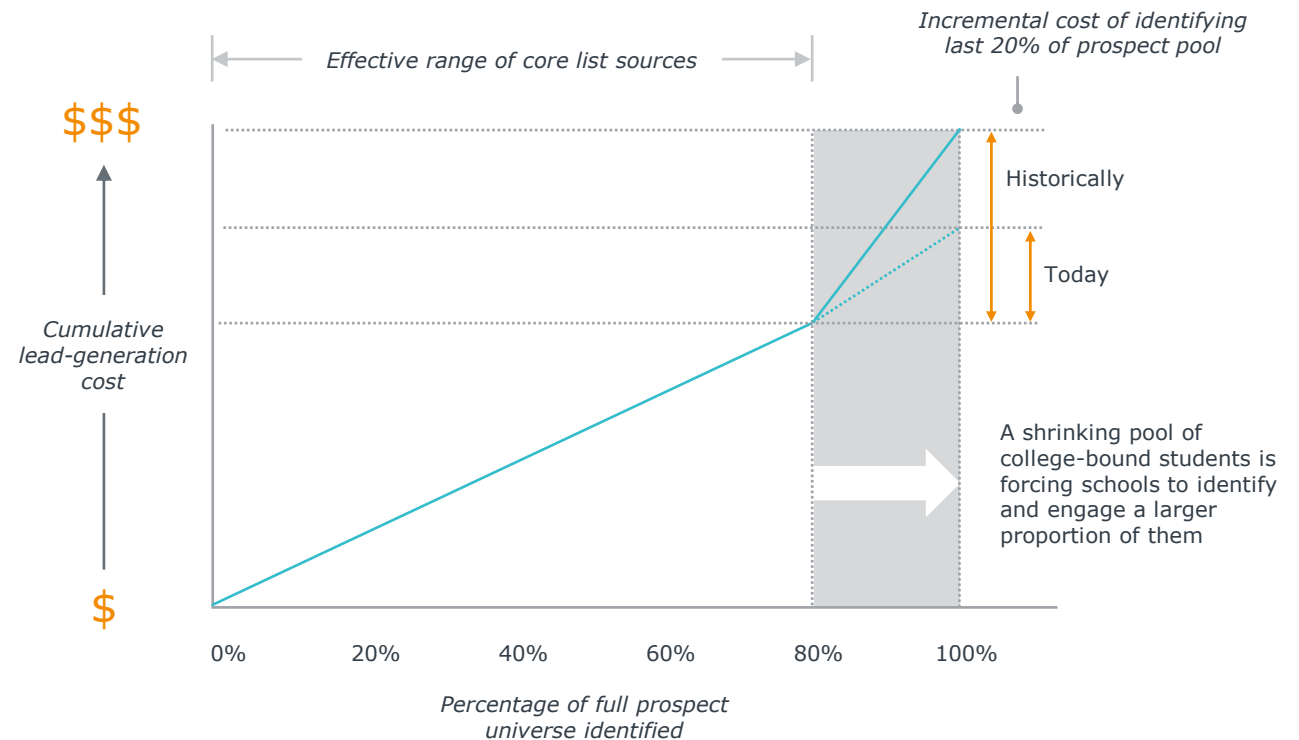
Section 2:

Generating Actionable Insights on Prospects

What You Need to Know About Prospective Students

Information that drives outcomes

As outlined in the introduction to this report, recruitment marketing audience sources and conversion channels play three primary roles: identifying students to recruit, providing actionable insights on students, and moving them through the funnel. This section focuses on the second of those objectives.

Varied sources of insight

Types of insight on prospective students that have the greatest impact on recruitment efforts fall into the three main categories shown at right.

Potential sources of those forms of insight are highly varied, encompassing everything from traditional test-based list sources to statistical modeling applied to campaign data.

Three Key Categories of Actionable Insight

With Corresponding Sources

1   Students' level of interest in your institution

How this information is used:

Triaging high-intensity outreach

Representative sources:

Qualified leads (e.g., Intersect Connections, Cappex Inquiries), predictive modeling

2   Students' academic ability

How this information is used:

Determining admissibility and institutional aid award

Representative sources:

Standardized testing, HS GPA, predictive modeling

3   Students' needs, interests, and preferences

How this information is used:

Boosting response to recruitment outreach

Representative sources:

Analysis of data from student interactions with recruitment channels

Source: EAB research and analysis.

A Read on Student Intent Unlocks High-Intensity Approaches

Insight on intent

This page offers some context on the first of the three forms of insight on prospective students to be covered in this section—their level of interest in your institution.

Triaging intensive efforts

One striking feature of today's increasingly competitive higher education markets is the new level of intensity schools are showing in their cultivation of prospective students—efforts that include such resource-intensive undertakings as flying prospective students to campus and having faculty reach out to them personally.

Tactics like these absolutely do have a demonstrable impact on students' likelihood to convert, but they are far too expensive to apply indiscriminately across your entire prospect pool. Getting a clear read on student intent enables you to focus those efforts selectively on students likely to respond.

Total Cost of Outreach Versus Total Revenue from Resulting Enrollment

Targeted Versus Untargeted Outreach, High-Intensity Approaches

——— Total Cost   ········ Total Revenue

High-intensity outreach quickly becomes unsustainable when not targeted

$

Intensive outreach applied indiscriminately across prospect pool

Intensive outreach focused on high-intent prospects

e.g., Cappex and Intersect inquiries

Intensity of recruitment-marketing outreach

Low ⟶ High

Use of these is increasingly common as colleges compete over a shrinking prospect pool

Examples of high-intensity outreach

- Expensive mailers
- Handwritten notes from current students
- Calls from faculty
- Immediate live availability of counselors
- One-on-one, in-person visits from counselors
- Lavish dinners
- Flying students to campus

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Readymade Insight on Intent: Cappex Inquiries and Intersect

Sources of high-intent leads

Within the channel portfolio framework developed by this white paper, the primary role played by sources of qualified leads is that of giving you a read on a student's likelihood to choose your institution. A student's availability via either Cappex Inquiries or Intersect, for example, correlates with a markedly higher likelihood for them to enroll at your institution.

Desirable overlap

One related question is if and how Cappex and Intersect, which are in many respects similar, should be used in combination.

One important consideration in this regard is that the insight they offer on students is additive. As noted at right, students who engage with both Cappex and Intersect convert at more than double the rate of students who engage with only one or the other. This demonstrates how overlap between sources, far from being mere redundancy, can offer highly valuable and actionable new insight on students.

Offering Similarly Powerful Intelligence on Students' Likelihood to Convert

	Intersect Connections	Cappex Inquiries
Exclusively students who have invited your institution to reach out to them	✓	✓
How much more likely students from these sources are to enroll[1]	5.5x	6.9x

Additive insight

Students who engage with both Cappex and Intersect convert at more than double the rate of students who engage with only one or the other.

1) Inquiry-to-enroll rate relative to students engaging with EAB Cultivate only (i.e., rate for students engaging with Cappex + Cultivate or Intersect + Cultivate divided by rate for Cultivate only).

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Cappex and Intersect Offer Complementary Benefits

Unique contributions

As noted on the preceding page, one reason to use both Cappex and Intersect is that a student's presence in both sources offers valuable additional insight into their intent. Another is that they are complementary in their coverage—you'll get some students from each that you don't get from the other.

Distinct student experiences

The student experience differs markedly across Cappex and Naviance, the platform on which Intersect draws. Students will use one or the other or both, depending on their search style, temperament, media habits, what stage of their college search they're in, demographic characteristics, the type of information they're looking for, etc.

Furthermore, the coverage of Cappex and Intersect varies by region and school segment, which further accounts for their complementarity.

The degree to which the two sources bring unique benefit is suggested by the fact that more than half of schools that use one of these channels also chooses to use the other.

Student Perspective Highlights Unique Aspects of Cappex and Naviance

	Cappex	Naviance
Phase of student journey	Exploration	Planning
Accessibility	Available to anyone with an Internet connection	Exclusive to students at high schools that use Naviance
"Feel"	Informal	Official
Depth of school profiles	Moderate	Deep
Who else is on it?	Peers	Parents and counselors
Integration with official student record	None	Direct
Demographics	Special relevance for underserved students via College Greenlight	-

College Greenlight, a subsidiary of Cappex, has relationships with hundreds of community-based organizations (CBOs) throughout the country. Through these partnerships, it provides colleges with access to students who can be difficult to find through other channels and, additionally, offers valuable insight about their college preparedness.

61%
of colleges that use Intersect also use Cappex[1]

Source: EAB research and analysis.

eab.com

New Insight from Conversion Channels

"Make versus buy"

As explained on the preceding pages, you can "buy" readymade insight on prospective students' level of interest in the form of qualified leads from sources such as Cappex and Intersect.

Similar insight can also be "made" by you, via analysis of students' interactions with your recruitment-marketing outreach and engagement channels (your virtual tour, for example).

New perspectives on student intent

This idea is not new; historically, a student's response to direct-marketing outreach functioned as just such an indication of intent.

The difference today is that there are many additional ways for students to engage with you and more ways for you to see those interactions, each of which is associated with a different form of insight into their level of interest in you.

This gives a more granular and nuanced understanding of prospective students' intent.

An Increasing Number of Ways to Gauge Student Intent

	Yesterday	Today
Response to email from college	✓	✓
Response to mailer from college	✓	✓
Campus visit	✓	✓
Admissions counselor interactions	✓	✓
Enroll360 Yield response	✓	✓
YouVisit interactions		✓
.edu interactions		✓
Wisr interactions		✓

11x

Higher inquiry-to-enroll rate for students interacting with YouVisit virtual tours

91%

Admit-to-enroll rate for students who interact with a Wisr ambassador

Source: EAB research and analysis.

eab.com

A Need for New Ways of Assessing Academic Ability

Testing is still front and center

A second crucial category of insight on prospective students concerns their academic ability.

Standardized tests will continue to be most schools' go-to source for this type of insight, together with high school GPA. And, within the portfolio framework developed in this white paper, gauging academic ability remains the primary reason for acquiring names from ACT and SAT testing.

Pursuing alternate approaches

That said, uncertainty around the future of standardized testing (see pages 18 and 19 of this report) is causing many enrollment teams to seek out alternate means of assessing students' academic ability.

This includes the development of rigorous, scalable, and equitable approaches to standardizing high school GPA—difficult work that many enrollment teams struggle with. It also includes approaches based on the development of better predictive models for student success.

Varying Degrees of Future Promise for Different Ways of Predicting Student Success

	Trend	Comment
Standardized test score	↓	The likely decrease in testing volume in coming years is poised to make standardized test scores a less crucial part of prospective students' profile than they currently are.
High school GPA	↔	Predictive power guarantees high school GPA a lasting and crucial role in admit decisions, but difficulty normalizing GPA across students in a scalable way limits its appeal as a replacement for standardized test scores.
Predictive modeling	↑	Data science based on vast longitudinal data sets spanning the pre- and post-enrollment settings is offering new insight on prospective students' likelihood to succeed, independently of test score.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Inferring Students' Needs from Their Digital Body Language

A revolution in relevance

One of the major recent advances in digital media is their ability to reliably serve content that closely matches audiences' needs, interests, and preferences at any given moment in time.

Casting a wide net

Students increasingly expect a high level of relevance in your recruitment-marketing outreach to them and in the inbound channels where they encounter you (e.g., your .edu).

This is one respect in which using an appropriately expansive array of interconnected channels becomes important.

Your ability to provide the right degree of customization depends on how deeply you understand a student at the moment they're engaging with you. That, in turn, depends on how much information you have on them. The more channels through which they are interacting with you, the more of that information you'll have.

Insight Available on Students Versus Channel Interactions

Insight available on students

More channels = more insight

Being present in more channels boosts your chances of encountering students

Different channels provide different types of information on students

email	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Digital ads		✓	✓	✓	✓
YouVisit			✓	✓	✓
.edu				✓	✓
Wisr					✓

Channel interactions

data → Unified student record

Topics of interest
Preferred content formats
Stage of search journey
Preferred communication channels

Representative insights available on a hypothetical student:

- She is interested in environmentalism and international policy
- She is more concerned than most students about financial aid
- She's very interested in your surrounding community
- She doesn't like email
- She prefers video over other content formats
- She's in the midst of a period of heavy interaction across several of your channels

Source: EAB research and analysis.

eab.com

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Section 3:

Moving Students Through the Funnel

Which Search Channels Students Value, and Why

A focus on conversion power

As outlined in the introduction to this report, recruitment marketing audience sources and conversion channels play three primary roles: identifying students to recruit, providing actionable insights on students, and moving them through the funnel. This section focuses on the third of those objectives.
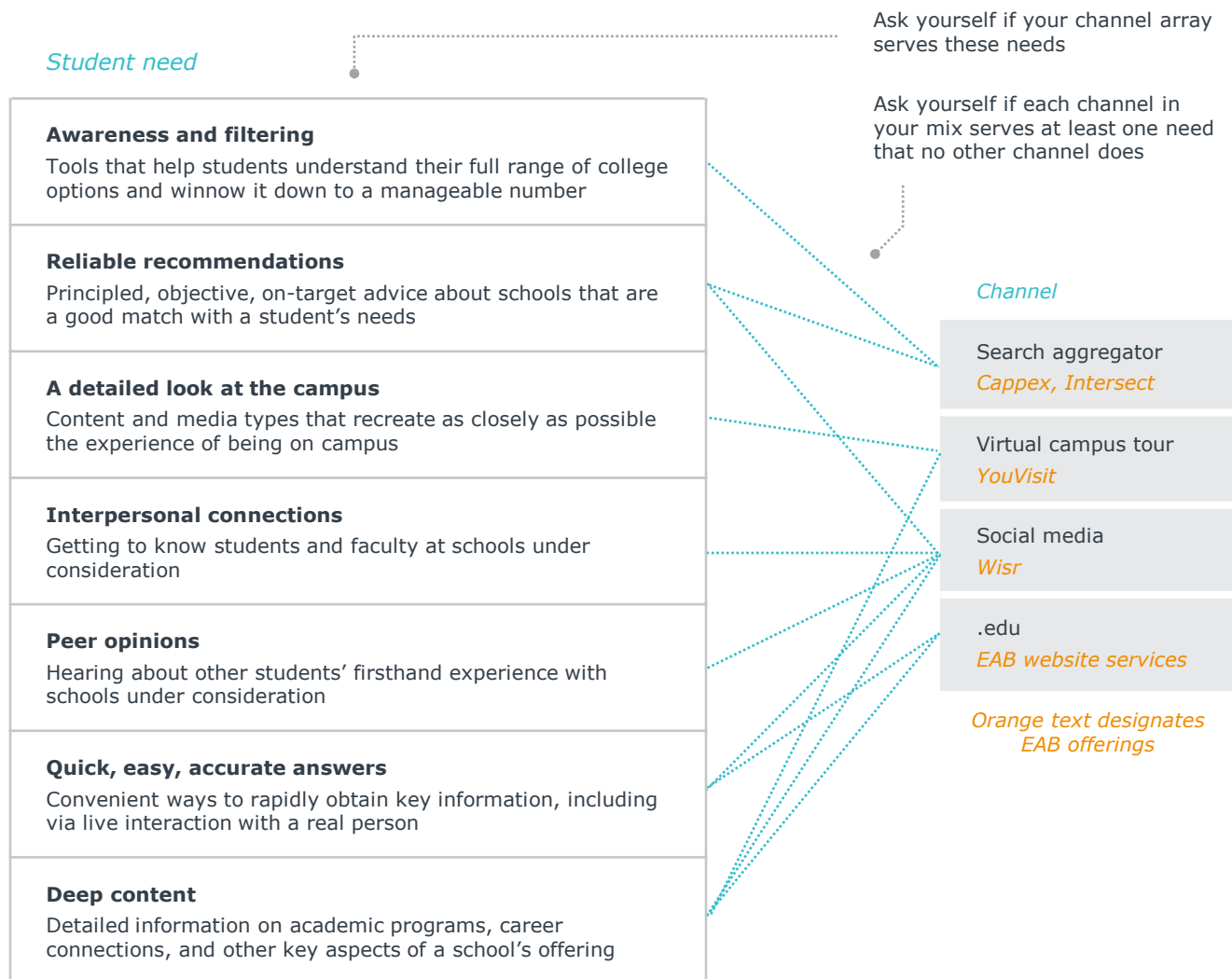
A channel-selection challenge

When assembling a portfolio of conversion channels, you'll encounter the difficult question of how to pick and choose within the large, complex, and compelling universe of possibilities available to you.

One helpful way of looking at the problem, illustrated at right, is to consider how your current or proposed channel ecosystem addresses the most urgent needs students face during their college search. Are you on at least one channel that does a good job of meeting each requirement? And is each of your channels uniquely serving at least one need?

Students' Needs and the Channels That Best Serve Them

Student need

Ask yourself if your channel array serves these needs

Ask yourself if each channel in your mix serves at least one need that no other channel does

Awareness and filtering
Tools that help students understand their full range of college options and winnow it down to a manageable number

Reliable recommendations
Principled, objective, on-target advice about schools that are a good match with a student's needs

A detailed look at the campus
Content and media types that recreate as closely as possible the experience of being on campus

Interpersonal connections
Getting to know students and faculty at schools under consideration

Peer opinions
Hearing about other students' firsthand experience with schools under consideration

Quick, easy, accurate answers
Convenient ways to rapidly obtain key information, including via live interaction with a real person

Deep content
Detailed information on academic programs, career connections, and other key aspects of a school's offering

Channel

Search aggregator
Cappex, Intersect

Virtual campus tour
YouVisit

Social media
Wisr

.edu
EAB website services

Orange text designates EAB offerings

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Student-Favored Search Channels You Can Influence

A question of control

As outlined on the preceding page, one way of accurately evaluating your array of conversion channels is to think through if and how they address urgent needs students have during their college search.

Another key consideration is how much opportunity each channel gives you to influence students—a factor that varies a lot across the channels college-bound students favor.
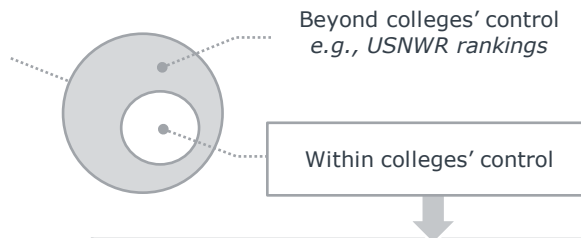
Degrees of influence

Your ability to influence students in this context typically boils down to a handful of considerations, including your ability to determine what information on your school is shown within the channel, which students see it, and how often they see it.

The following pages examine several key EAB conversion channels in terms of the considerations outlined above and on the preceding page.

Conversion-Active Channels, by Degree of College Control

Search channels that effectively address a pressing student need

Beyond colleges' control
e.g., USNWR rankings

Within colleges' control

Colleges' ability to influence

Channel category	Type of influence possible	Degree of influence
Social networks *e.g., YouTube, Instagram, Reddit*	Editorially "open"—third parties can influence how a college is portrayed, and schools need to compete for students' attention	moderate
Search aggregators *e.g., Cappex, Niche, Naviance/Intersect*	These sites typically limit and standardize information shown on schools, to facilitate filtering and comparison, but also offer colleges varying degrees of control over their profiles. Colleges can also pay to have their schools featured more prominently	moderate
School-owned sites *e.g., .edu, Wisr, YouVisit*	Colleges maintain complete control over content and format of information included on these sites	high

Source: EAB research and analysis.

YouVisit Virtual Tours as a Conversion Channel

Eliminating visit barriers

It is a proven fact that campus visits are a deciding factor in many students' choice of college.

YouVisit taps into this keen interest by providing students with a virtual tour of your campus that comes as close as possible to the real thing. It also offers students ways of experiencing your campus that go beyond what's possible in the in-person visit format.

Equally important is the fact that YouVisit greatly reduces barriers to "visiting": students need not travel, they can focus selectively on parts of the tour that are of greatest interest to them, they are able to quickly and freely browse tour stops, and they can easily revisit as often as they like.

Under your complete control

Although developed in partnership with YouVisit's creative teams, the content of YouVisit virtual tours is dictated 100% by the colleges for which they are developed.

Students' Needs Addressed and Forms of College Influence Available

Critical student **search need** addressed	**Judging the appeal of your campus** Approximately half of students say a visit to campus was a very important factor in their choice of college; many students don't visit because of time and resource constraints (including 26% of low-income students).
Related YouVisit **attributes**	**Immersive exploration** Immersive and navigable 360-degree photo and video environments recreate the experience of actually walking around and freely exploring campus. **Compelling stories** Painstakingly researched and tested tour narratives and itineraries ensure a maximally meaningful experience for visitors. **Rich media** Advanced digital-media formats layer photos, text, video, and audio in a seamless whole, creating an extraordinarily information-rich environment for visitors.
Forms of **influence** available to colleges	**100% college-controlled** Within the broad constraints of the YouVisit virtual tour format, which is extremely flexible, colleges can determine exactly what is shown to students and how.

11x

Higher inquiry-to-enroll conversion rate for students engaging via YouVisit[1]

Higher likelihood to convert is due to at least two factors: the positive influence that YouVisit tours have on students' perception of an institution (causation) and the fact that students choosing to interact with a particular school's virtual tour already have an elevated level of interest in that school (correlation).

1) Versus EAB Cultivate only.

Source: CIRP, "The American Freshman: National Norms, Fall 2019"; EAB 2019 survey of new college freshmen; EAB research and analysis.

Wisr Virtual Communities as a Conversion Channel

Networked insight for students

Wisr gives prospective students direct access to members of your campus community, within a framework that promotes focused interaction around topics that matter most to them.

No less important is the opportunity that Wisr gives prospective students to get their peers' perspective on critical issues related to their college search and, more generally, to get quick and easy answers to pressing questions.

Strategically varied control

The design of any given school's Wisr site is 100% under that school's control.

This is also essentially true of the content on the site. That said, part of what makes Wisr sites so effective is that they include spaces where prospective students can post whatever they want (within the broad limits of maintaining a safe and friendly online environment). This strategic ceding of control on the part of the school ensures that students are reliably seeing the kind of objective, authentic peer opinion that drives repeat visits and time spent engaging with the site.

Students' Needs Addressed and Forms of College Influence Available

Critical student **search need** addressed	**Interpersonal connections** This category covers several related aims that are very important to students during search: getting to know a school's people, getting objective opinions from peers, and getting quick, easy answers to important questions.
Related Wisr **attributes**	**Site-utilization boosters** Wisr sites are "staffed" by current students and other members of your campus community who are trained in best practices for promoting engagement among prospective students and who are managed to that end. **A curated user base** Wisr site users are all prospective students or current members of your campus community, participating at your invitation. This curated community gives users a sense of safety and belonging, encourages participation, and reduces "noise" in the channel. **Architecture that mirrors students' interests** The basic building blocks of a Wisr site are customizable interest groups or "communities" that reflect prospective students' most pressing priorities and show how your value proposition maps to those priorities.
Forms of **influence** available to colleges	**Deliberately varied levels of control** Wisr sites strike an ideal balance between school-generated content and user-generated content, guaranteeing a critical mass of authentic peer opinion on the site while giving hosting colleges influence over topics discussed, volume of posts, etc.

3.5x

Higher admit-to-enroll conversion rate for students engaging with a student ambassador via Wisr

Higher likelihood to convert is due to at least two factors: the positive influence that Wisr has on students' perception of an institution (causation) and the fact that students choosing to interact with a particular school's Wisr site already have an elevated level of interest in that school (correlation).

Source: EAB research and analysis.

The .edu as a Conversion Channel

Broad and deep

The .edu appeals to students as a helpful guide to the full spectrum of information they might be looking for on your institution. They also value it for the in-depth information it provides on especially complex issues (e.g., financial aid) or topics that are of special interest to them.

A blank canvas

Arguably, .edus are the recruitment-marketing conversion channel over which colleges have the most control, and they are, undoubtedly, among the most important channels.

A key related consideration is that the very open-endedness of the .edu format, which accounts for the high degree of control it affords, represents its own challenge—that of the blank canvas. Much of the effectiveness of your .edu as a conversion tool depends on you getting right the content it contains.

Students' Needs Addressed and Forms of College Influence Available

Critical student **search need** addressed	**One-stop shop for official information** Students want one main source they can go to for information about your school (even if that source ends up directing them to other sites or resources). **Deep content** Students want detailed and comprehensive information on complex issues (e.g., financial aid) and topics of special interest to them (e.g., majors they are considering).
Related .edu **attributes**	**Leveraging students' search habits** Internet users are trained to think of an organization's website as the main place to look for information on it, making the .edu a natural go-to for students seeking to learn about you. **Well-suited to long-form content** The open-endedness of the website format makes it uniquely suited among digital channels for hosting detailed and easily browsable long-form content. (Other Internet channels are optimized for other purposes and are constrained accordingly).
Forms of **influence** available to colleges	**100% college-controlled** Colleges have complete control over how their website is structured and what information is shared on it—and a correspondingly large and complex set of decisions to make.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Cappex as a Conversion Channel

Helping students find a match

Cappex is a search aggregator, helping students quickly sort through a very large universe of potential schools to find the best match for them.

Options for influence

Cappex is not primarily an influence channel—as noted in Section 2 of this report, the main purposes it serves are to find you students to recruit (via the Candidates program) and to give you actionable insight into student intent (via the Inquiries program).

That said, it does have features that enable recruiting colleges to control whether or not students encounter them in Cappex and, if they do, what they see. Colleges can, for example, pay to have their name displayed prominently to students who fit the profile they're looking for. Colleges also have some control over their Cappex profile and can influence students by ensuring that the content in it addresses key student concerns and does so in an engaging way.

Students' Needs Addressed and Forms of College Influence Available

Critical student search need addressed	**Navigating a complex set of options** Students want to know about all colleges that might be a good fit for them but are daunted by the sheer number of options to consider. They want tools that help them quickly and easily create a thoughtfully considered short list. **Finding funding** While a lot of scholarship aid is made available to students each year, it is spread across a bewildering variety of granting organizations and funding types. Mastering that landscape represents thousands of dollars of potential value to students.
Related Cappex attributes	**Powerful and unique filtering tools** Like other search aggregators, Cappex helps students arrive at a comprehensive yet manageable short list of appropriate college options, filtering the full universe of US schools based on desired characteristics. A particular strength of Cappex is its ability to filter colleges based on their connections with community-based organizations (CBOs)—a feature with special appeal for underrepresented students. **Proprietary scholarship research** Cappex maintains one of the nation's most comprehensive, detailed, and up-to-date searchable databases of scholarships available to college-bound students.
Forms of influence available to colleges	**A customizable college profile** Colleges can tweak their Cappex profile, including content shown, topics addressed, formats used, and links included to material outside the platform. **Powerful promotional capabilities** Cappex partners can control how often their institution is shown to selected types of students on the Cappex website, using an array of highly flexible targeting parameters.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Intersect as a Conversion Channel

Helping students find a match

Naviance, on which Intersect draws, engages students by offering them powerful tools for sorting through the very large and complex universe of potential colleges they might attend.

Options for influence

Intersect is not primarily an influence channel—as noted in Section 2 of this report, the main purpose it serves is to give you actionable insight into student intent.

That said, it does offer enrollment teams options for engaging students. Colleges can, for example, pay to have their name displayed to students who match their recruitment criteria in cases where the college is also a match for the student's interests. Colleges can also augment their Naviance profile with engaging content.

Students' Needs Addressed and Forms of College Influence Available

Critical student **search need** addressed	**Navigating a complex set of options** Students want to know about all colleges that might be a good fit for them but are daunted by the sheer number of options to consider. They want tools that can help them quickly and easily create a thoughtfully considered short list.
Related Intersect/Naviance **attributes**	**Powerful and unique filtering tools** Like other search aggregator sites, Naviance lets students filter the full universe of US colleges based on desired characteristics, but it also provides helpful information unavailable from other sources, such as the percentage of applicants from a student's high school who have historically been admitted to any given college. **A platform for collaborative search** Intersect draws on Naviance, which is used not only by students but also by parents and high school counselors. This makes it is a natural hub for coordination between students and their key college-search allies and stakeholders.
Forms of **influence** available to colleges	**A customizable college profile** Intersect partners can augment their profile with engaging content. **Powerful promotional capabilities** Intersect partners can control how often their institution is shown to selected types of students within Naviance, using an array of highly flexible parameters.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

EAB

Section 4:

Benefits of Deep Channel Integration

Deep Integration Unlocks the Full Potential of Channel Combinations

Making 1+1=3

For your audience sources and conversion channels to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, they need to work together seamlessly.

That means, for example, having them respond to each other in an instantaneous and automated way.

As explained across the next few pages, effective integration of this sort unlocks several benefits over and above those associated with any one channel, including boosting the overall number of student interactions, generating otherwise unattainable insight on students, and elevating the degree of customization in your recruitment marketing outreach.

A "pre-integrated" option

Highly sophisticated enrollment teams could, in theory, build out those sorts of connections themselves, across a suite of channels that they've assembled in à la carte fashion. For most schools, the more realistic option is to get the channels they need in "pre-integrated" form, from a single source.

À la Carte Approach Versus Integrated Approach
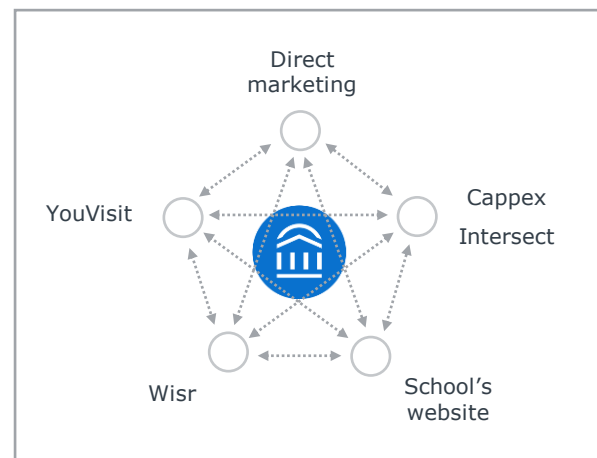
À la Carte Multi-Partner Approach
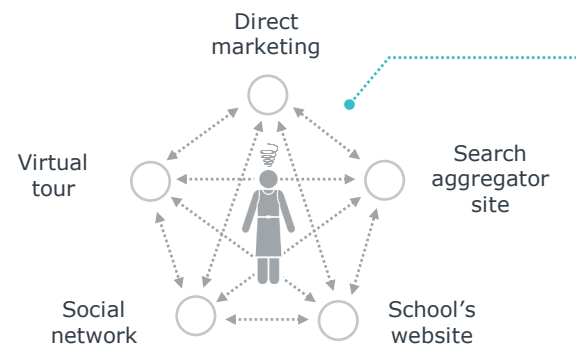
10

Channel pairings to manage

- Data standardization
- Automation of data transfer
- Consistency of creative
- Coordination of strategy
- Content updates
- Calls to action

Integrated Approach

1

Relationship to manage

EAB Strategic Leader

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Channels Feed Other Channels in a Self-Reinforcing System

Strategic referrals

When your audience sources and conversion channels are tightly integrated, you can optimize referral traffic between them in ways that can be difficult or impossible to achieve otherwise.

You can, for example, place specific calls to action within each, prompting students to visit other channels in your portfolio. Those prompts may be based on considerations such as the natural sequence of those channels in the funnel progression or customized on the fly to reflect particulars of any given student's history of interaction with you.

An interaction engine

The approach described above has the net effect of boosting the total number of interactions you have with any given student and ensuring that they're getting the right kind of experience at the right time. This, in turn, has the downstream effect of elevating your funnel conversion rates.

Inter-channel Referral Maximizes Student Interactions
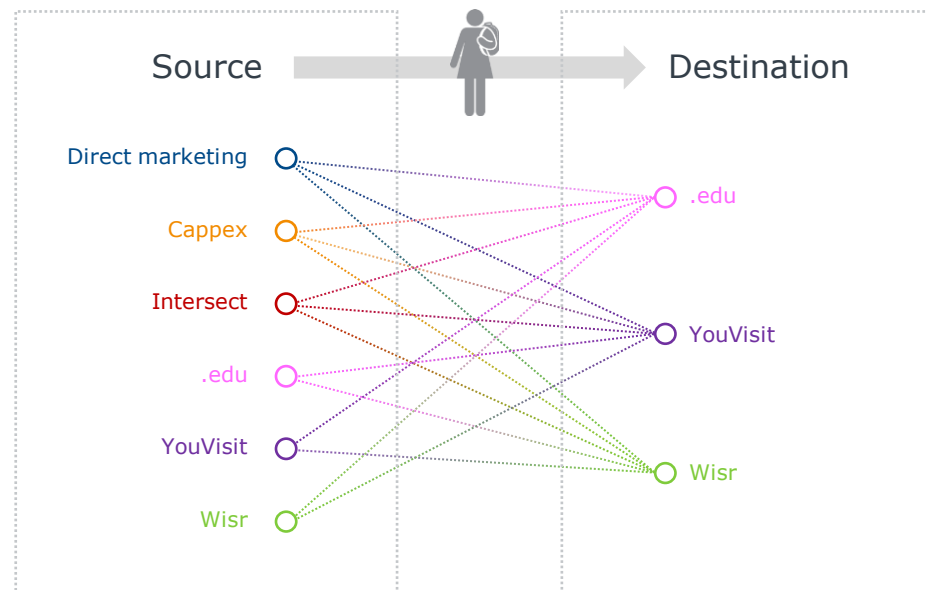
Source: EAB research and analysis.

Responsive Recruitment Marketing Communications

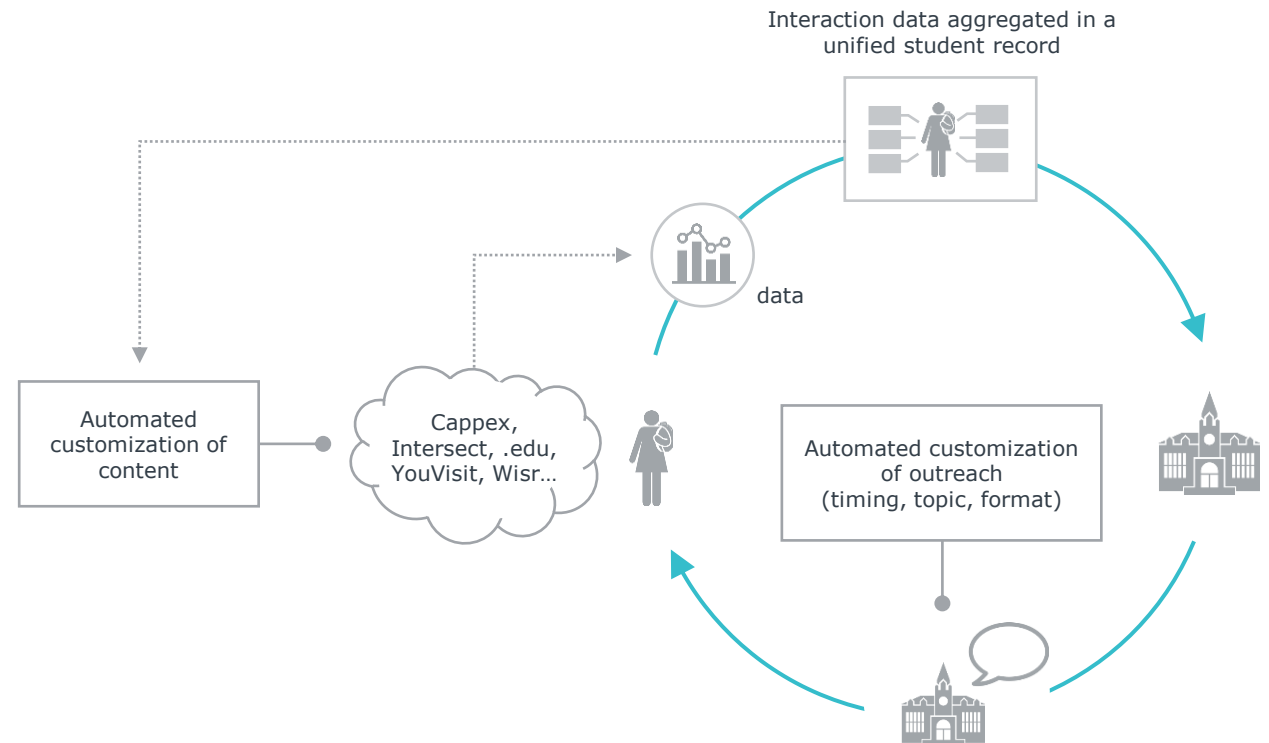**A foundation for customization**

Perhaps the most compelling benefit of a tightly integrated channel portfolio is the unique level of customization it enables in your recruitment marketing outreach.

A more tailored student experience

Seamless connections between channels enable data from student interactions with any given channel to be immediately fed into a unified student record, creating a continuously enriched student profile.

Data in that profile, and insights gained form analyzing it, can, in turn, be used to customize outreach to students. That includes the timing, topics, and format of direct communications, such as emails you might send them. It also includes content they see in conversion channels such as your virtual tour.

Recruitment Communications Tailored Based on Student Data

Interaction data aggregated in a unified student record

data

Automated customization of content

Cappex, Intersect, .edu, YouVisit, Wisr...

Automated customization of outreach (timing, topic, format)

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Introducing Enroll360

To help enrollment leaders reach their goals in a difficult environment, EAB has invested in and integrated multiple leading platforms and channels. The result is **a connected recruitment ecosystem with four key differentiating features:**

- Unrivaled reach via proprietary student databases and channels that deliver high-intent, best-fit students to your school

- Immersive digital experiences that engage students at every step of their search and bring the vibrancy of your student experience and brand story to life

- Seamless marketing orchestration across inbound and outbound channels, enabling you to keep pace with shifting student behavior

- Intelligent analytics that illuminate the student journey and fuel each decision your team makes with insights based on students' digital body language, proprietary data sets, and predictive analytics

Enroll360 Is Powered by Responsive, Automated Marketing
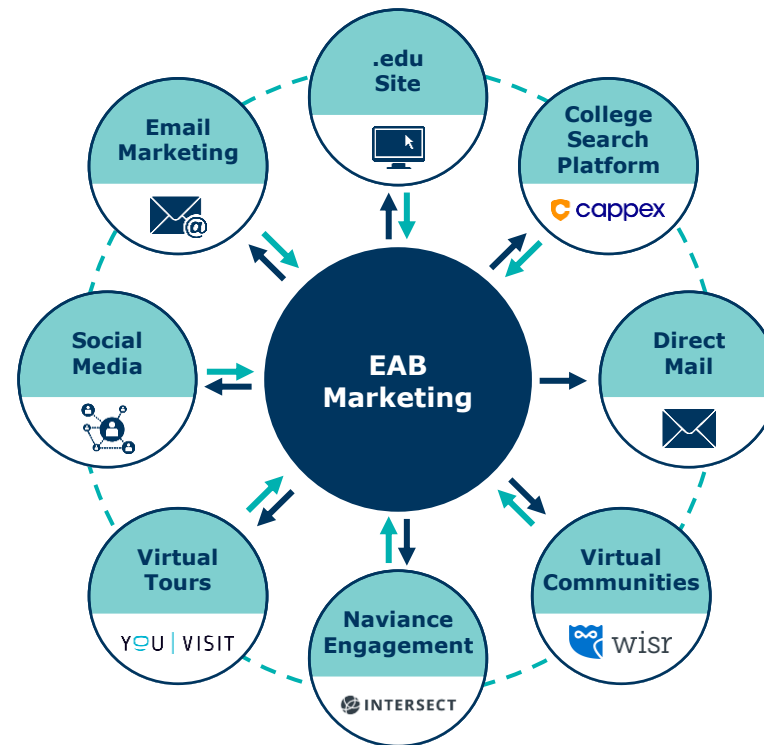
The Enroll360 portfolio can be tailored to meet any school's recruitment and enrollment goals. We can partner with you on a holistic approach or tackle a narrow challenge—you decide.

- **Diverse platforms** that honor Gen Z's communication preferences
- **Data capabilities** that generate actionable insights from student engagement patterns
- **Responsive marketing** that enables personalized, real-time interactions with students

Recruit and Enroll Your Next Class with Enroll360

With you every step of the way

Led by a Strategic Leader with deep enrollment expertise, we will orchestrate support, leveraging our specialist teams to discover which strategies will work best to fulfill your goals and objectives. Regular meetings are integral to our support model, and we are always just a phone call or a click away.

A reassuring track record

For the last 40 years, EAB has partnered with leading colleges and universities to support enrollment leaders. With both our comprehensive partnerships and our niche products, our primary goal is to help you reach yours.

There's a good reason why 1,100+ schools choose to collaborate with EAB on enrollment: we deliver results.

Your Enrollment Team, Extended and Amplified

Experts Included on Your Enroll360 Team

Art directors	Targeting analysts
Copywriters	Researchers
Digital marketers	Enrollment management consultants
Web developers	Financial aid principals
Client data stewards	Data scientists
Strategic analysts	Project managers

Your EAB
Strategic Leader
orchestrates support

Our Results

6%	**6-point**	**7:1**
Average increase in enrollment for first-year EAB partner schools	Higher first-year retention rates for EAB-recruited students	Average return on investment for first-year EAB partner schools

Recruit and Enroll Your Next Class with Enroll360

Enroll360 Premier Solutions to Help You Succeed at Every Stage of the Funnel

Our solutions deliver outsize results despite challenging demographics and a complicated channel environment

Cultivate	Apply	Aid	Yield

Enroll360 Products for Specific Challenges

Expanded Reach and New Audience Channels

Build awareness and cultivate engagement with prospects using leading influence and inquiry-generation platforms

Intersect	Cappex

Digital and Web Strategy

Optimize your website and digital strategy to help engage and convert high-intent prospective student audiences

.EDU	SEO

Virtual Engagement and Digital Experience

Engage Generation Z in virtual environments that help sell your brand story in a competitive market

YouVisit Virtual Tours	Wisr Virtual Communities

To speak with an expert or schedule a diagnostic conversation, email **eabenrollmentcomm@eab.com**.
Learn more at **eab.com/Enroll360**.