Junior Year Wrap-Up

An Overview of the College Application Process
Agenda

- To Do List
- Reach, Target, and Likely Schools
  - Scattergrams
- Application Types
- Requesting Transcripts
- Requesting Letters of Recommendation
  - Senior Questionnaire
  - Resume
- Sending standardized test scores
- Use Naviance!
To-Do List

• **By now, you should have...**
  ◦ Taken the SAT or ACT at least once – or planning to before end of school year
  ◦ Determined if you will be taking the SAT Subject Test (if required) in June or fall 2018
  ◦ Had a **Junior Meeting** with your Counselor
  ◦ Started to create a list of colleges you’re interested in (15-20)
    • Begin to notice similarities: type of campus, size of campus, location, cost, culture, programs offered.
    • **Remember to add these to “Colleges I’m Thinking About” in Naviance!**
To-Do List

- **You should be...**
  - Adding the colleges you’re considering to Naviance.
  - Identifying the people you want to write you a letter of recommendation (min. 2 people)
  - Discussing financial aid with your family—how will you be financing your college education? *What is affordable?*
  - Researching college majors (if you have no idea where to begin, take the **Career Interest Profiler** in Naviance).
  - Taking campus tours/attend info sessions.
To-Do List

• *This summer, you need to...*
  ◦ Start to whittle down your list of 15-20 schools by doing further research, taking campus tours, talking to students, etc.
  ◦ Focus on applying to between 6-8 schools (approx. 3 reach schools, 3 match schools, and 2 likely schools).
    • Decide if you are applying Early Action/Decision to any of your prospective colleges and tell your counselor!
  ◦ Add the schools you will be applying to on the *Colleges I’m Applying to* list on [Naviance](https://www.naviance.com).
Early Action vs. Early Decision

- November deadlines
- Non-binding
- Can apply to multiple EA schools
- Will be able to compare multiple admissions and financial aid packages
- Your counselor can continue to send out transcripts to prospective colleges AFTER you’re accepted to a college through EA

- November deadlines
- Binding
- Can only apply to one ED school
- Will NOT be able to compare multiple admissions and financial aid packages
- Your counselor WILL NOT continue to send out transcripts to prospective colleges AFTER you’re accepted to a college through ED

REMEMBER Quality vs. Quantity!!! Don’t get caught up in the Early Action craze if it doesn’t fit your timeline!
To-Do List

- *This summer, you need to...*
  - Fill out the *Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire*.
  - Research college essay requirements for the schools you are considering.
To-Do List

- **Before school starts, we recommend...**
  - You start or complete the Common Application. See the complete list of Common App schools [here](http://www.commonapp.org).
    * It’s open! You can create your account now!
  - You start or complete applications for colleges that *don’t accept* the Common App.
  - Get a good start (or complete!) your college essays.
Speaking of college essays...

- Take it seriously! This is a common pitfall for students.
  - Great grades + boring essay ≠ college acceptance
- Don’t write what you THINK the colleges want to hear.
- Avoid:
  - Grammatical errors
  - Insincerity or being disingenuous
  - Using the wrong college name
  - Not actually answering the essay prompt
  - Using clichés (“There’s no ‘I’ in team!” or “Everything happens for a reason!”)
  - Being too polarizing - a fine line between creativity and…weirdness!
  - Restating your resume or transcript
  - Sounding entitled
- College essay video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MaLsluIvdE
Diversify Your College Options!

**Match/Target Schools**
A match school is a college that you are *pretty likely* to get into because your test scores, class rank and / or high school grades fall right into the middle range when you look at the school's profile. **Note that even stellar students should consider the top U.S. colleges and top universities to be reach schools, not match schools.** The admissions standards for these schools are so high that nearly perfect SAT scores and a straight 'A' transcript are no guarantee of acceptance.

**Reach Schools**
A reach school is a college that you have a *chance* of getting into, but your test scores, class rank and / or high school grades are a bit on the low side when you look at the school's profile. **The top U.S. colleges and top universities should *always* be considered reach schools, for the admissions standards are so high that not even perfect SAT scores guarantee acceptance.**

**Likely Schools**
A likely school is a college that you will almost certainly get into because your test scores, class rank and / or high school grades are well above average when you look at the school's profile. Even if you're a valedictorian with perfect SAT scores, you should never consider the top U.S. colleges and top universities to be safety schools. The admissions standards at these schools are so high that no one is guaranteed acceptance.
How Do I Know What is a Reach, Target, or Likely School for me?

- Take a look at the Scattergrams on Naviance!
What Application Does My College Use?

- **The Common App**
  - Over 500 colleges/universities use the Common App. Chances are, your prospective schools do!

- **The Coalition App**
  - Over 90 colleges will accept the Coalition App, but only 3 are exclusive (UMD, U. of Florida, U. of Washington-Seattle)

- **Non-Common/Coalition App**
  - Any school that does not accept the Common App or Coalition App
  - Typically allow you to apply online, via the admissions website
The Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success

- The platform includes three main features:
  - **Virtual Locker**: Students can collect and store information that may be useful when they apply.
  - **Collaboration Platform**: The teachers, counselors, employers, and mentors who are supporting the student’s college search and application can offer feedback.
  - **Application Portal**: Students select the information from their Virtual Locker that they want to include with their application to Coalition member universities.

- Students may create an account for the sole purpose of applying for admission. They don’t need to use the Virtual Locker or Collaboration Platform.

- **Video**: [https://vimeo.com/154620117](https://vimeo.com/154620117)
What Application Does My College Use?

- Every college website will tell you what application they require, but you can find out very easily in Naviance!

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<tr>
<th>Identifying Symbol</th>
<th>Application Type</th>
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<tr>
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*Counselors can’t use Naviance to send docs if you see this symbol.*
Academic Transcripts

• A transcript is a document that lists:
  ◦ Each course you took in high school
  ◦ The final grade you received in each course
  ◦ The credit value of each course
  ◦ Practicum information
  ◦ Your cumulative GPA
    • The average of every academic year GPA
  ◦ Your counselor’s name

• Most colleges require that your high school submits your transcript for review.
Example of an Academic Transcript

![Example of an Academic Transcript](image-url)
Requesting Your Transcript

• To request a transcript, **you will need to first** add your colleges to the *Colleges I’m Applying to* list (see next slide).

• We **recommend** that you submit a college application prior to requesting a transcript.
  ◦ You **should** indicate that you have applied to the school on the *Colleges I’m Applying to* list as well!

• Ask Mrs. Zach for a **pink** transcript request form in the Counseling Office.
*Naviance will be going through an update this summer, so this feature will look a bit different, but will function the same*
Requesting Transcripts

- You must pick up the **pink** transcript request form from Mrs. Zach in the Counseling Office.
- If you are under 18, your parent needs to sign the release on the backside of the form.

![Transcript Form Image]
The submission type on Naviance should match the box you check on the request form.

Requesting Transcripts

Transcript Request Form – Seniors

Student Name: __________________________ Email: __________________________
Date Request Submitted: ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College/University</th>
<th>Common App</th>
<th>eDocs</th>
<th>3 Mail</th>
<th>Date You Submitted Application</th>
<th>College Deadline</th>
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<td>9.</td>
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<td>YES □</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All requests must allow 10 school days for processing and please include:
Letters of Recommendation

- Colleges often ask for two or three recommendation letters from people who know you well.
- These letters should be written by someone who can describe your skills, accomplishments and personality.
- Colleges value recommendations because they:
  - Reveal things about you that grades and test scores can’t.
  - Provide personal opinions of your character.
  - Show who is willing to speak on your behalf.
  - Letters of recommendation work for you when they present you in the best possible light, showcasing your skills and abilities.
Letters of Recommendation

- Pay attention to what schools ask for letters of recommendation – not all need or want them.
- Pay attention to how many letters a school requests – often they will not look at letters that exceed the minimum.
  - Many public universities do not require letters (e.g. Penn State, Pitt, West Chester).

"I want to show my colleges I’m well-rounded, so I wrote a poem in Spanish about how chess club has made me a better quarterback."
Requesting Letters

- Your counselor can provide a letter if your college requires it, or if you would like your counselor to write for you.
  - The counselor letter will not take the place of a teacher letter.
  - You can request this when requesting your transcript.

- **We strongly recommend that you ask for a letter of recommendation in person as a first step.**
Requesting Letters

- Once you asked your recommender in person, pick up a blue letter of recommendation request form from Mrs. Zach in the Counseling Office.
- You should indicate what schools your recommender needs to send their letter(s) to.
  - This allows you to individualize your letters to certain schools if you prefer.
- Make sure your schools are on your Colleges I’m Applying to list.
Requesting Letters

The submission type on Naviance should match the box you check on the request form.
Requesting Letters

• There is one more step after you give your writer the blue form – you must request the letter on Naviance too!

• Just like adding a friend on social media sites, adding your recommender to your Naviance account allows them to send the letter to your school(s).
Requesting Letters on Naviance

- Click “Letters of Recommendation” under Colleges tab
Requesting Letters on Naviance

- Click “Add Request”
Requesting Letters on Naviance

- Select a teacher from the dropdown menu
- Choose either a specific school or all schools
- Add a personal note if you want

Letters of recommendation
Add new request

Here you can ask a teacher to write you a letter of recommendation. If you don’t have any colleges in your list yet, you may still make a request. Make sure you give your teachers plenty of time to write your recommendations!

1. Who would you like to write this recommendation?*

   Select A Teacher

2. Select which colleges this request is for:*

   - Choose specific colleges from your Colleges I’m Applying To list
   - All current and future colleges I add to my Colleges I’m Applying To list

3. Include a personal note to remind your recommender about your great qualities and any specifics about your request:
# Requesting Letters on Naviance

- Keep track of your teacher submissions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Recommendation For</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Recommender(s)</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Cancel Request</th>
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<td>See applications</td>
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<td>Submitted</td>
<td>✗</td>
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<td>Bucknell University</td>
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<td>KATHRYN MEYERS, MICHAEL ZACHARDA</td>
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<td>Drexel University</td>
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<td>The George Washington University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tufts University</td>
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<td>KATHRYN MEYERS, MICHAEL ZACHARDA</td>
<td>Submitted</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add Request
Requesting Letters

- Remember, you must pay attention to how many letters your school requires and where you have asked your writers to send their letters.
- For example, UVA allows applicants to send one teacher letter of recommendation.
- If you ask multiple teachers to submit a letter to UVA, the first one to upload and submit their letter in Naviance will be the one UVA receives.
Letters from Non-STEM Recommenders

- We understand that you may be interested in asking someone for a letter who does not work at the STEM Academy.
- This may include coaches, church leaders, community members, and/or employers.
- Unfortunately, these people cannot use Naviance to send their letters.
- You will need to provide these recommenders with a stamped and addressed envelope so they can mail the letter directly to your prospective school(s) – or add them as an additional recommender in your Common App or Coalition account.
Senior Questionnaire

- In order to help your counselor write a letter of recommendation, we ask that you fill out a Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire.
- The questionnaire will be available via Naviance before the end of the school year.
Sending Standardized Test Scores

- Send all SAT/ACT scores directly from Collegeboard or ACT.
  - When registering for the SAT students can select 4 schools to have a free score report sent.
  - Fee required for additional reports.
- STEM does not send score reports!
Open Your Laptops!

First, let’s go to the Common App website at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)

Next, let’s try to find a college application for a school that doesn’t use Common App. Here’s a few to try:

- University of Pittsburgh ([www.pitt.edu](http://www.pitt.edu))
- Penn State University ([www.psu.edu](http://www.psu.edu))
- Georgetown ([www.georgetown.edu](http://www.georgetown.edu))

Finally, let’s check out Naviance - take a look at some of the following tools: scattergrams, Super Match College search, check out careers and clusters, etc.