

# College Application Process

Once you have finalized the list of colleges to which you will apply, it is time to begin the application process:

## 1. Transcript Release Forms

- Each senior must complete a **Transcript Release Form** located in the Guidance/School Counseling office or on the Guidance web site for the colleges or universities, they wish to apply to. If you are under 18, a parent/guardian must sign it. Once you submit the Transcript Release Form, your counselor can send your transcript and supporting documents to your requested colleges.
- An **official transcript** is required to determine admission. For a transcript to be official, it must be sent from the guidance office to your college/university, i.e. school to school.
- An **unofficial transcript** is one that is in your possession, and not sent directly from the Guidance office. You can request an unofficial transcript for visits, interviews, scholarships, and coach contact.
- When requesting official transcripts, please allow **15 school days** in advance of your first deadline or target date.

| <i>IF YOU HAVE A DEADLINE OF</i> | <i>YOUR TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM IS DUE TO GUIDANCE BY</i> |
|----------------------------------|---|
| NOVEMBER 1                       | OCTOBER 11  |
| NOVEMBER 15                      | OCTOBER 25  |
| DECEMBER 1                       | NOVEMBER 8  |
| DECEMBER 15                      | NOVEMBER 26   |
| JANUARY 2                        | DECEMBER 3  |
| JANUARY 15                       | DECEMBER 20   |

- After Guidance receives your Transcript Release Form, we will add the college name to the “Colleges I’m Applying To” section of your Naviance account.

- The Guidance Department will submit transcripts electronically, through Naviance, to colleges to which you sent your application electronically. All Common Application schools and most other colleges prefer and will accept electronic transcripts.
- Transcripts include your courses and final grades from freshman through junior year and courses in progress in your senior year. Transcripts also include a GPA for each of those years as well as a cumulative GPA and an unweighted GPA. When asked for your GPA on an application, it is the cumulative GPA that should be reported. Your cumulative GPA is listed in your Naviance account as well.
- Colleges may request your 1<sup>st</sup> Marking period grades. We will notify you when the “1<sup>st</sup> marking period” cutoff date will be. On that date, we will record what your average grades are for each course. If a college requests the 1<sup>st</sup> marking period grades, please forward the request to your counselor to process.
- The Guidance office will automatically send a **Mid-Year Grade Report** in February to the colleges you have applied to (unless you complete a form requesting that we do not send the mid-year grades). The Mid Year Grade Report will list your 1<sup>st</sup> Semester Grades along with an updated cumulative GPA.
- **\*\*At this time, please be aware that Rutgers and some other colleges ask you to self-report your academic transcript. However, you still must fill out a Transcript Release Form for these colleges. You will complete an SRAR (Self-Reported Academic Report) as part of the Rutgers application. Your counselor can provide you with an unofficial transcript in order to fill out the SRAR. A FINAL transcript will be required if admitted.**

## 2. Applications

- **You are responsible for preparing and submitting each of your applications.** Your application is the most important document in the process. It should be the first document submitted and must meet the deadline! The college will start a file (either a paper or electronic file) to which other school documents can be added.
- **Submission methods:** Electronic applications and supporting documents (transcripts and recommendations) are preferred over paper and will usually be uploaded to a college’s server within a couple of days. However, the status of a student’s application packet may not be updated right away even if the college has your materials. Please be patient. Paper applications and supporting documents will be delayed 3- 4 weeks in processing, as they must be opened, sorted, scanned, and filed. In most cases, the paper documents are then destroyed, as most college admission offices are going “green” and admission officers need to access documents from home, as well as “on the road.”

- **Be Aware of Different Decision Types:**

- **Early Action-** Early action programs have earlier deadlines and earlier decision dates, but they are not binding. They do not require you to enroll if you are accepted. Student must reply by May 1.
- **Restricted Early Action-** Students who apply restricted early action are not permitted to apply early decision or early action at other institutions. These programs are called restrictive early action or single choice early action. Students do not have to commit if admitted and are free to apply via regular admission elsewhere. Students must reply by May 1.
- **Early Decision-**Decisions are BINDING! You can only apply to one school Early Decision and if admitted, you must attend. Students should only consider applying Early Decision if it is clearly their first choice, if you meet the requirements for admission, and you are aware that the financial aid package will arrive after you have received your admission decision.
- **Regular Decision-** Decisions are made and announced from mid-March through mid-April. Students must reply by May 1.
- **Rolling or Modified Rolling Decision** - Decisions are made as completed applications are received. Students must reply by May 1.
- **VIP Applications**– are sent to you by the school. They offer shorter notification time, no fee and fewer recommendations. Completing this type of application does not increase your chances of admission.
- **Common Application and Supplements:** The Common Application simplifies the process, as you complete the Common Application once and send it to any member college to which you wish to apply.
  - Go to [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org). Create a user name and password. Your application will be stored here, so that you may use the same version for all your colleges that accept the Common Application.
  - **Supplements** - Many schools have writing supplements to the Common Application. The “Dashboard” tab of your Common Application will indicate if a writing supplement is required. It is your responsibility to determine if a supplement is required. If you apply electronically, you must complete the supplement electronically as well.

## **\*\*FERPA WAIVER on Common Application**

- **There are two steps to completing the mandatory FERPA waiver on the Common Application.**

1. To reach the FERPA waiver, first go to the Education portion of the Common Application and add your high school. To do this, go to the “Common App” tab, click on “Education” on the sidebar and add your high school. Then go to the “College Search” tab and add a college you plan on applying to. Go to the “My Colleges” tab and you will see “Recommenders and FERPA” on the sidebar. Once you click on “Recommenders and FERPA”, you will see the FERPA Release Authorization. Read and complete the form, sign electronically and save.

**Please keep in mind that you can only see the 'Assign Recommenders' tab, when you add at least one school to your account.**

2. Next, go to your Naviance account and find the “Colleges” tab. Click on “Colleges I’m Applying To” section, and in the box indicated, enter the email address you previously used to register for the Common Application. Click on “MATCH”. Now that you have matched your Naviance account with your Common Application account, your counselor and teachers will be able to submit your documents to the colleges.

\*\*For video instructions on Common App/Naviance Matching, go to the main page of your Naviance account and in the Welcome Message for Seniors section, click on Read More.

- **The FERPA waiver is completed once and covers all current and future colleges and recommenders. The FERPA section locks as soon as the applicant matches their Common Application and Naviance accounts.**

## **3. Resumes**

- Most college applications, including the common application, will have a section where you will add your resume/activity details into the application. Some individual colleges allow you to upload a resume as an attachment, or to cut and paste a Microsoft Word version of your resume into the on-line document. If you are unable to add your resume to the application document, you may email it to the admission office as an attachment, and ask that it be added to your file. If you have questions regarding a college’s policy on resumes, please contact the college directly for clarification or instructions.

## **4. Essays**

- Many colleges require an essay as part of the application process. Follow the guidelines established for length and topic. **Check spelling, grammar and punctuation.** There are a number of helpful websites on the useful links page to help you with your essay. Your English teacher will also offer suggestions; just ask.

## 5. Letters of Recommendation

- Most colleges request a **Counselor letter of recommendation**.
- In order for your counselor to write your letter of recommendation, you must submit a student brag sheet (in Naviance), parent brag sheet (guidance webpage) and complete the resume in Naviance.
- Each college determines if they require **teacher letters of recommendation**, and if so, how many. Teacher letters of recommendation are intended to shine a “spotlight” on the student in an academic setting.
- It is your responsibility to ask teachers for letters of recommendation in person. This may be done as early as junior year, but at least 4 weeks prior to your first deadline. The initial request should ALWAYS be made in person.
- If you requested a teacher’s recommendation prior to the summer, it is your responsibility to go back to the teacher, confirm, and communicate your first deadline date.
- Also remember to thank your teachers for writing your letters. Writing letters goes outside the realm of teachers’ professional responsibilities. Your teachers will put much time and effort into preparing excellent references for you. Be sure to be appreciative of their support. A Thank you goes a long way.
- **There are THREE steps to getting your Teachers’ letters sent to colleges:**
  - 1) **Complete and Submit a Transcript Release Form to the guidance office.** The schools you listed on your form will then be populated into the Naviance “Colleges I’m Applying to” section.
  - 2) **Complete a Teacher Recommendation Request Form.** This form should be given to the two teachers writing your letters well in advance of your first deadline date. This form will give your teachers a checklist for the colleges you are applying to. If you decide at a later date to apply to additional colleges, you will need to fill out and give your teachers a new form.
  - 3) **Next, log into your Naviance account.** Go to the Colleges tab. Click on “letters of recommendation.” Go to “Add Requests”, Select your teacher from the dropdown box. Then select the colleges you would like your teacher to send the letter to and save. This online request is necessary so the teacher can send your letters electronically and you can track the status of this action.
- Teachers will upload their recommendation letters to their own Naviance account. They will complete the Common Application teacher form (if necessary for your colleges) on Naviance, as well. Do not invite teachers to complete electronic forms.

## 6. SATs/ACTs:

- Don't forget to request that **SAT/ACT scores** be sent to the colleges officially by the appropriate testing agency, if they are required.
- SAT and ACT test scores are not part of your official transcript.

***Please note: Your admissions file will not be brought to committee at the college until all required documents are received.***

## CHECKLIST

\_\_\_ Submitted Transcript Release Forms to Guidance

\_\_\_ Created a Common App account and Filled out the FERPA waiver

\_\_\_ Matched my Common App account with my Naviance account (in Naviance)

\_\_\_ Completed the Student Brag Sheet and updated my Resume on Naviance

\_\_\_ Submitted a Teacher Recommendation Form to both my teachers who are writing my letters

\_\_\_ Sent a Naviance Teacher Recommendation Request to my two teachers from my Naviance account.

\_\_\_ Sent my SAT/ACT scores to the colleges I'm applying to from the testing agency website