

College Application Guide for Seniors



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FOREWORD

For the majority of Notre Dame High School students, one of the most important tasks that will occur in the senior year is to apply to and be accepted by an institution of higher learning. It has been our experience that the earlier a student begins the process, the better their chances are of being accepted by the school(s) of their choice. The school counselors will discuss the application process with students, and this guide will help to summarize that meeting. If students later find that they have questions, it is *their* responsibility to see their counselor.

This booklet is intended to be a planning guide for both the student and parent. The School Counseling Department feels that it answers over ninety percent of the most commonly asked questions concerning the college and post-secondary school application process. It is not, however, a document that covers every possible contingency.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

OVERVIEW

The process of applying to college can be expensive, time-consuming, and complicated. It is recommended that a student apply to several colleges (3 to 7) of different levels of selectivity. Application forms, view books, brochures, and other pertinent information must be secured **by the student** from the colleges. Students should also plan to visit colleges to which they are seriously considering applying. The summer between the junior and senior year is an ideal time for these visits, although the early fall of the senior year can also be used for campus visits. If it is not possible to visit a college, the student should at least visit the college website to get a sense of what the school is like and what it has to offer.

Students should apply to college as early as possible in their senior year, preferably before the Thanksgiving holiday. In most cases, each college will have an application deadline (or several deadlines) designed to fit that particular institution's needs. **DO NOT MISS A COLLEGE'S DEADLINE.** Deadlines are specific and have been set for a reason. **DO NOT MISS A DEADLINE!!!**

The School Counseling Department has found that if a student applies to an institution early in their senior year, the student's chance of being accepted seems to increase. Therefore, the School Counseling Department **strongly** encourages students to apply to their selected colleges no later than the Thanksgiving holiday of the senior year.

Please Note: Colleges that require standardized test scores will require students to send their SAT and ACT test scores directly from the College Board or ACT. Even colleges

that allow students to self-report test scores with their initial application will still require an official score report when the student commits to the school. Therefore, students should always take advantage of the four (4) score sends included with the price of the SAT and ACT. If you choose to wait to send your scores until after you have received and reviewed them yourself, the cost is \$12.00 per college.

IMPORTANT!: Students should **not** wait to apply to a college because they have not yet taken the SAT or ACT as a senior or are hoping to get higher scores on a later test date. Colleges realize that almost all seniors will take the SAT in October or November of their senior year and, if required, the SAT Subject Tests in November or December of senior year. The student merely has to indicate to the College Board which colleges should receive their respective scores. **You should never delay submitting your portion of the application because you are waiting to take the SAT or ACT.**

Each college determines what information it needs before it can make an informed decision on whether to admit or not admit a student. College "A" may ask for an official transcript, two teacher recommendations, and a counselor recommendation, while College "B" may not want any recommendation letters and may request that the student self-report their courses and grades. It is the student's responsibility to find out what documents each college requires.

Most colleges now use online application such as the [Common Application](#), the [Coalition Application](#), or the college's own online application portal. A few colleges still accept paper applications. **ALL APPLICATIONS WILL REQUIRE AN OFFICIAL SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT either immediately upon submission of the application or after a student commits to the university (see below).**

STEP-BY-STEP

- 1) Complete your college application(s) (online or paper) and submit it to the college with the required fee, if applicable.
- 2) Add the colleges to which you have applied to your "Colleges I'm Applying To" list in Naviance.
 - a. If you are using the Common App, you will simply complete the Common App account matching tool on the Naviance "Colleges I'm Applying To" page. To use the Common App Account Matching Tool in Naviance, please follow these steps:
 - i. Create a Common App account at www.commonapp.org;
 - ii. Complete your profile/contact information in your Common App account;
 - iii. Complete the Education section;
 - iv. Add at least one (1) college to your "My Colleges" list in the Common App;

- v. Sign the FERPA authorization (located in the “Recommenders and FERPA” link on the My Colleges page);
 - vi. In your Naviance account, go to “Colleges I’m Applying to” and click the “Match Account” button in the red message bar at the top of the page. Enter the email you used to create your Common App account in the Common App account matching tool.
- b. If you have applied to any colleges through an application other than the Common App, you will add those colleges to your College’s I’m Applying To list in your Naviance account manually by clicking the red circle with the white plus sign in your Colleges I’m Applying to list.

After you add your colleges to Naviance, be sure to answer the follow up questions about each application, and then click the “request transcript” link to request that your transcript be sent to the colleges you have applied to.

- 3) If you are applying **Early Decision (ED)** to any college, you **MUST** inform your school counselor of this fact before your transcript can be sent. Your counselor is required to sign a document indicating that they have discussed with you the legally binding nature of the Early Decision agreement, and they will need to meet with you to have this conversation.
- 4) The School Counseling Office will then process their part of the application. All sections that the school is required to fill out will be completed, an official transcript will be generated, and the entire package will be submitted electronically via Naviance or mailed to the college admissions office. **Once a transcript request has been submitted, the School Counseling Office will not hold an initial transcript for any reason – transcript requests will be processed and submitted in the order in which they are received. It is in your best interest to wait to request transcripts until AFTER you have submitted your application; if transcripts are sent before your application has been received by the college, they may not be attached to your application immediately and you will continue to receive notifications from the college stating that your transcript has not been received, when in fact it has already been sent.**
- 5) **PLEASE NOTE:** Although most transcripts and letters of recommendation are sent within one (1) week of receipt in the School Counseling Office, students and parents must allow a minimum of **ten (10) school days** between the time they submit a transcript or recommendation request and the time the transcript/counselor recommendation is sent to a college, especially if the college does not utilize electronic submissions.
- 6) Follow the above procedure in all cases **unless** a college specifically instructs the student to follow another course of action.

College Application Types and Definitions

You may see these phrases frequently as you go through the application process. Here's a quick guide to the meaning of each.

Early Action:

Programs which do not ask applicants to commit to attending if they are accepted are generally known as Early Action (EA) programs. They give students the benefits of early notification without the obligations of early decision. Even if accepted, students are free to apply to other schools and to compare financial aid offers.

Single Choice Early Action

(SCEA) programs specifically require students not to make EA applications to other schools, although they are free to apply elsewhere under the regular admissions round.

Early Decision:

This is not an obligation to be taken lightly, since schools honor one another's binding decisions. If you renege on an early decision obligation to one school, it is unlikely that another competitive school will accept you. Students can seek release from an early decision obligation on the grounds of financial hardship if the financial aid package they are offered is genuinely inadequate; however, the burden of proof in these cases is on the student. (By the way, an important drawback to early decision admissions is that they leave applicants with no leverage to negotiate a better financial aid package – the school knows you can't go anywhere else.)

Early decision applicants are expected to submit only one early decision application to one school. They can submit applications to other schools under normal application procedures, but agree that they will withdraw all those applications if they are accepted to the early decision school.

Regular Admission:

Colleges using this plan generally have a January, February or March application deadline and notify all of the applicants at the same time (but no later than April 15).

Rolling Admission:

Schools that use rolling admissions accept applications until they've filled all the spots in their freshman class. Decisions are then made on a case-by-case basis and you'll usually hear back within 4 to 8 weeks. However, there are some schools that accept applications under a rolling-admission policy and then send out decisions all at once. There may also be less competition, but this depends on you. If you apply in December, the school won't wait until March to compare you with all the other applicants and you could actually improve your chances of being accepted. Remember though, the reverse also holds true: the later you apply, the more competition there may be for fewer spots. Procrastinators beware! There's a lot of truth to that old saying, "You snooze and you lose!" Applying to a school with rolling admissions late in the game can also impact

your financial aid offer. A school's admission and aid policies are not one and the same. In fact, they usually come from offices that are nowhere near one another. If you're accepted after the free money's been doled out, you could be out of luck and limited to taking out loans.

Immediate/Instant Decision Days:

An opportunity for qualified high school seniors to participate in a quick, easy, and personal admissions process. You will meet with admissions staff, receive your admissions decision, preliminary financial aid information, and possibly a scholarship all in one day. These events may be held at your high school or on the college campus. Students planning to attend an Immediate/Instant Decision Day must ensure they meet the minimum qualifications for that college (if applicable).

Common Application

The Common Application is a single college application form that students can fill out online and send to nearly 900 Common Application member colleges/universities.

<https://www.commonapp.org>

Coalition Application

The Coalition App is a single college application that students can use to apply to over 140 participating colleges and universities. The "Locker" portion of the Coalition makes it unique because students may upload an unlimited number of supporting application pieces that might not otherwise be considered, including art portfolios, music compositions/performances, videos, etc.

<http://coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/>

COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATIONS

A college or university may ask the student's counselor to complete a section of the application. The questions colleges ask can most often be answered from school records, student interviews, personal observations, teacher input, and student resumes.

However, your counselor will be able to write a much stronger recommendation if you complete a Counselor Recommendation Request form, which can be found as a survey in your Naviance account, or as a blue paper form in the slots next to Mrs. Vail's desk. Please provide your school counselor with at least two (2) weeks' notice before your earliest application deadline (this means that if you have an application that is due on October 15th, you should give your counselor the recommendation request form by September 30th).

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

If a college to which a student applies requires separate letters of recommendation from subject teachers, the student must ask the teachers in person to complete the letter or form as required. The student **should provide the teacher** with a copy of the completed Teacher Recommendation Request form or a printed copy of their answers to the Teacher Recommendation Request Survey in Naviance (this form is DIFFERENT than the Counselor Recommendation Request) **at least 10-15 school days in advance of the date the recommendation is due**. If the teacher agrees to write a letter for the student, the student will then log into their Naviance Student account and complete the official recommendation request under "Letters of Recommendation" on the Colleges page as follows:

1. On the Colleges page, select the "Letters of Recommendation" link;
2. Click "Add Request;"
3. Select the teacher who will write your recommendation from the drop-down menu;
4. Select whether you want this teacher to send their letter to ALL of the colleges you apply to, or just a few (this is important because some colleges will only accept 1 recommendation; if you have requested recommendations from 2 teachers they will only accept the first recommendation that is submitted). Also, if you select the specific colleges option, you can see how many recommendations (if any) each college requires, and the maximum number they will accept);
5. Write a short request/thank you to the teacher;
6. Click "Submit Request."

Teachers will receive an email and will then be able to upload their recommendation and send it electronically.

If a college does not utilize electronic documents and instead requires that a hard copy of the recommendation be mailed to them, the student must provide the teacher with any forms that the college requires to be filled out and a stamped envelope with the name and address of the college.

When a college requires a teacher recommendation, understand that this is a letter from the teacher to the college concerning the teacher's assessment of the student's ability or performance in a certain subject and behavior in the classroom.

If you would like someone other than a teacher or counselor to submit a recommendation on your behalf (e.g.; coach, volunteer/employment supervisor, priest/pastor, etc.) you may invite them as an "Other Recommender" through the Common App, or provide them with hard copies of the recommendation forms required by the college. If using paper copies, it is advisable to also provide your recommender with a stamped envelope addressed to the college admissions office.

If there are any questions on the applicant's part, they should always consult with their school counselor.

Remember, once you submit your application, you cannot bring it back or make changes. Be sure you have reviewed all of your answers and have downloaded any and all supplemental forms required by the specific college to which you are applying.

TRANSCRIPTS

When a student formally applies to a college, the college will require an OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT of their high school grades. Please note that although some community colleges, such as Northampton Community College, might send you an acceptance packet without having received official transcripts, **YOU HAVE NOT YET BEEN TRULY ACCEPTED UNTIL THEY RECEIVE YOUR FINAL TRANSCRIPT WITH PROOF OF GRADUATION.** Colleges that ask students to self-report their courses and grades will only ask for a final official transcript after the student has graduated to confirm that the information the student submitted is true and correct. **Remember, all tuition payment must be up-to-date at the time a final transcript is requested! No final transcripts will be sent until all balances are paid in full!**

HIGH SCHOOL CODE

For identification purposes, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) has assigned every high school in the United States a different six-digit code. The code identifies the high school to colleges, government agencies, and scholarship programs. This number may be alternately referred to as the "High School Code," "The College Board Code," "The ETS Code," or "The CEEB Code." College applications, SAT registration, scholarship applications, and financial aid forms will usually ask for it.

The important thing to remember is that no matter what it is called, it is still the same code. Only ONE code number has been assigned to each high school, and the number for Notre Dame High School is:

391133

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid for post-secondary education is available from both the state and federal governments. In order to be considered for these programs, students and their parents must complete a **Free Application for Federal Students Aid (FAFSA)** and possibly a CSS Profile and college-specific financial aid form. **The FAFSA should be submitted in October of the student's senior year.** Both Federal and State financial aid availability is

dependent on Congress and the State Legislature passing revised funding legislation on a yearly basis. Therefore, there can be drastic changes to these programs from year to year. Unfortunately, there have been numerous occasions where this legislation has not been reauthorized until November or December of a student's senior year.

Awards may also be available from specific colleges and from private scholarship programs. It is the student's responsibility to research the aid available from these sources. Many private national and local scholarships are listed in your Naviance account. Additionally, your school counselors may send emails to you and your parents when certain local scholarships become available, so be sure to check your emails regularly!

The best place to start looking for **scholarships** is in your Naviance Student account. On the Colleges page, you will see a link titled "Scholarship List." Clicking that link will take you to a list of all the scholarships entered into Naviance. Selecting "Area Scholarships" or "Local Scholarships" in the "Browse by Category" drop-down menu will bring up all of the local scholarships that Mrs. Vail has painstakingly entered into the system for your benefit. Because very few people actually apply for these scholarships, your chances of receiving an award are excellent!

There are numerous search engines available to link you with national scholarships. Some of the more popular and highest-ranked scholarship search engines for 2019 are: www.cappex.com, www.unigo.com, www.bigfuture.com, and www.fastweb.com. Please note that some of these scholarship search engines will inundate your inbox with not only scholarship opportunities, but also surveys, contests, and advertising materials. It may be a good idea to set up a separate email account just for your national scholarship search so that your inbox doesn't get clogged with irrelevant information.

If you'd like to know how much merit scholarship money a college will award you before you even submit an application, use www.raise.me. Students can earn "micro-scholarships" for certain achievements in grades 9-12, such as earning an A in a class, volunteering, attending a college fair, or playing a sport. Over 200 colleges and universities currently participate, including:

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Carnegie Mellon University | Michigan State University | University of Alabama |
| Cedar Crest College | Moravian College | University of Central Florida |
| Clarion University | New York University | University of Delaware |
| Drew University | Pennsylvania State University | University of Maryland |
| Drexel University | Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute | University of Massachusetts |
| East Stroudsburg University | Susquehanna University | University of Pennsylvania |
| Franklin & Marshall College | Syracuse University | University of Pittsburgh |
| Georgetown College | Temple University | University of Rochester |
| Lafayette College | Texas Tech University | University of Tampa |
| Lehigh University | Tulane University | West Virginia University |

Remember, this is only a partial list.

Please Note: Colleges may set their own deadlines for financial aid separate from their application deadline. Remember to **meet the deadlines set by the college you plan to attend!**

One of the newest and most efficient scholarship sites is www.GoingMerry.com. This site was developed in 2016 as a research project by graduate students at Stanford University. The site makes finding and applying for scholarships much easier, working much like the Common App does for college applications.

COLLEGE ATHLETICS

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) requires that **ALL** students who plan to participate in **ANY** Division I or Division II college athletic program must register online with the **NCAA Eligibility Center** while the student is in high school. Failure to do so will mean that the student will not be NCAA Certified. If a student is not NCAA certified, they will be unable to receive any athletic scholarship money, and will be prohibited from playing DI or DII college sports.

As of this writing, student athletes who would like to play any NCAA Division I or Division II sport must follow the directions set by the NCAA. It is the student's responsibility to make sure they are properly registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center at www.eligibilitycenter.org. Typically, students are encouraged to register with the NCAA at the end of their sophomore year of high school; official "six-semester" transcripts will be uploaded at the end of the student's junior year of high school.

If you have attended any high school other than Notre Dame during 9th, 10th, or 11th grades, an official high school transcript from each school attended must be submitted to the clearinghouse. Student athletes are responsible for submitting transcript requests through the NCAA Eligibility Center website.

SERVICE ACADEMIES

At each of the five (5) military service academies (the US Military Academy [a.k.a., "West Point"], US Naval Academy, US Air Force Academy, US Merchant Marine Academy, and US Coast Guard Academy), there are no tuition or room & board charges, and each student is paid a monthly stipend to cover their uniforms, books, supplies, and other expenses. To be considered for acceptance, a student must meet rigorous academic and physical requirements and secure an appointment to an academy from their local US Congressional Representative or US Senator. Students who

attend and graduate from a service academy are required to serve a military commitment of at least five (5) years.

The admissions process is highly selective, with each academy typically only accepting 7-18% of applicants each year. Students interested in applying to a service academy should first contact their academy of choice and check with their school counselor in the Spring of their junior year for information on beginning the application process. They should additionally apply for one of the Summer Seminars offered at either the Naval Academy, the Military Academy, or the Air Force Academy. Any students who are serious about attending a service academy must also apply for ROTC Scholarships (described below) when applying to their “backup” four-year colleges.

ROTC SCHOLARSHIPS

Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Scholarships are available from each military branch of service. Exact amounts of an award vary from service to service and year to year. Acceptance of an ROTC Scholarship commits the student to serve an active duty requirement after college graduation in the branch of service that awarded the scholarship.

Both academy and ROTC representatives visit Notre Dame periodically and are the best source of information as to application requirements and procedures. Visits will be announced via the morning and afternoon announcements, as well as posted on Naviance. You may sign up for visits using your Naviance account.

For more information, you may contact any local military recruiter or go to TodaysMilitary.com/training/ROTC. If you plan to pursue an ROTC scholarship, you should begin the process prior to the start of your senior year.

YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR

All seniors will have an appointment with their school counselor in the Fall to discuss the college application process, scholarships, and career goals. Students should feel free to schedule additional appointments with their school counselor at any time, especially if they have questions or do not understand something in relation to the college application or test registration process. Although the school counselors maintain an open door policy, if your question is not an emergency, it is best to schedule an appointment to ensure that no other students are scheduled at that time.

Parents may also schedule an appointment with the school counselor to help clarify the college and financial aid application process.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS VISITS

Many colleges, trade schools, technical schools, and branches of the armed services send representatives to visit Notre Dame High School throughout the school year (although most visits typically occur between September and December). Students should listen to the daily announcements and check their Naviance accounts and email for an updated schedule. Students must sign up for visits through their Naviance account no later than 2:00 PM the school day prior to the visit (this means that if the visit is on a Monday, you must sign up by 2:00 PM on Friday!). Please note that signing up for a visit does not guarantee attendance; students' subject teachers hold the authority to grant or deny permission to leave class. Students should never miss a test, quiz, or presentation to attend a college visit. In the event that a student is unable to attend a visit for which they have signed up, they should notify their school counselor, who can collect admissions materials from the representative for them. If the student has specific questions for the representative, they may relay these to their school counselor who can ask these questions for them.

STANDARDIZED TESTING **GENERAL TEST INFORMATION**

When applying to a college, students should read all application materials thoroughly to determine what tests are required. The student is responsible for registering for the required tests. Most testing agencies prefer online registration.

PROPER IDENTIFICATION

When a student takes either the SAT or ACT, they will be required to show a photo ID (driver's license, state identification card, or official current student ID) along with their admissions ticket for the correct test date and location. These restrictions are designed to prevent an imposter from taking a test in place of the registered student. In addition, the student is required to upload a photo when registering for the test. This photo will be compared to the photo ID presented at the time of testing.

THE SAT (COLLEGE BOARD)

Most colleges expect that a student will take the SAT for the first time in the Spring of their junior year, and a second time in the Fall of their senior year. Depending on certain circumstances, it may be to the student's advantage to take the SAT twice in Spring of junior year, and again in Fall of senior year.

Seniors who did not take the SAT in junior year should register to take the SAT in August and October of their senior year.

The SAT focuses on a student's math reasoning and evidence-based reading and writing skills. Overall, the purpose of the SAT is to measure the kind of reasoning and analytical skills that have been proven to show success in college by assessing how students apply what they have learned in school. Colleges and universities use the SAT as only one of many factors in admissions decisions. The most important factor is the grades you have earned in challenging high school courses. The best preparation for the SAT - and for college - is to take challenging academic courses and read and write widely. Khan Academy has also partnered with the College Board to offer free, online SAT prep that can be personalized based on a student's PSAT scores. Go to www.satpractice.org for more information.

The College Board offers students a "score choice" option in reporting their scores. Students can send all or parts of their scores to their chosen colleges. This may cause some confusion as students may forget what schools were sent what scores from which tests. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the school counseling office to send all three scores from each test to the colleges you are interested in with each SAT registration. You are allowed to select four (4) different schools to receive your scores at the time you register to take the SAT. Take advantage of this free service and send your scores to four colleges each time you take the test.

Colleges will take either your highest individual scores from each test section from any test date (referred to as "superscoring"), or your highest one test date total. Therefore, you have nothing to lose by sending a complete score report each time.

Just remember, you must have your scores sent to the colleges directly from the testing provider. If you list the colleges you'd like to receive your scores when you register to take the test, you will not only save some money but you will also receive a decision from the college sooner than if you wait until your scores are in to report them.

Further information on test dates, location, and registration can be found at www.collegeboard.org.

SAT SUBJECT TESTS

SAT Subject Tests are one-hour exams administered by the College Board in a specific subject of study. Students may or may not be required to take them depending on the colleges to which they apply. Some popular schools that recommend or require Subject Tests are: Brown University, the California Institute of Technology, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Duke University, Georgetown University, Harvard College, MIT,

Princeton University, and Yale University. It is the student's responsibility to determine whether they are required to take any SAT Subject Tests. Students should carefully check the admissions requirements for every college and major to which they intend to apply to determine whether any SAT Subject Tests are required. If they are, the student should also check to see how a specific college utilizes the scores - for placement into college courses, or to help in determining acceptance.

If a student must take one or more SAT Subject Tests, the same literature should be consulted to ascertain which tests are required (Math, Chemistry, Language, etc.), and when the colleges want them to be taken. Some colleges may require that the test scores reach them by a certain date. Generally, most students who are directed to take an SAT Subject Test take them no later than December of their senior year.

SAT Subject tests are usually administered on the same test dates and at the same test centers as the standard SAT test. The standard SAT and SAT Subject Tests CANNOT be taken on the same day! However, a student can take up to three (3) SAT Subject tests in the same day.

Further information on test dates, location, and registration can be found at www.collegeboard.org.

ACT TEST

The ACT consists of subject area tests in English, Math, Reading, and Science. **Students who elect to take the ACT should ALWAYS also register for the Writing component.** Many colleges will only accept the ACT in lieu of the SAT if the Writing component is included.

Further information on test dates, locations, and registration can be found at www.actstudent.org.

A complete listing of all SAT and ACT test dates, including links to register, can be found online in your Naviance account.

When you register to take any of these tests, please be sure to use the Notre Dame High School Code, 391133. If you do not, your school counselor will not receive notification that you have registered for the test and will not receive your scores.

Parts of a Complete College Application

□ **The application form**

This is the part of the application where you fill out your name, address, parents' information, etc. Most of the time, this is something you'll have filled out online by going to the Common App website or the college website and clicking "Apply Now," although some colleges still allow paper applications. This is probably the most important part of the application, as it is what alerts colleges that you are applying and is what they use to begin a file for your information.

Essay: Many colleges ask students to write an essay as part of their application. The essay is your chance to help the college know you better; what is most important to you in life, what are you passionate about, what experiences have you had that have fundamentally shaped your personality and outlook on life?

□ **Application Fee**

Yes, colleges usually charge you a fee just to submit your application. These fees generally range from \$30-\$50.

Fee Waiver: Some colleges will issue fee waiver codes if students apply before a certain date, and others might give fee waiver codes to the school counselor to distribute to students. Additionally, if your family is low-income and you qualify for free or reduced lunch or any form of public assistance, you are most likely eligible for a fee waiver as well so that the cost of applying to colleges does not become a burden to your family. See your school counselor if you believe this applies to you.

□ **School Profile/Secondary School Report**

These documents are prepared and submitted by your school counselor. You do not need to do anything regarding these forms aside from requesting your transcript.

□ **High School Transcript**

You will request your high school transcript through Naviance. Your transcript lists all of the classes you have taken and the grades earned in each course in grades 9-12. It also lists your school-sponsored clubs and athletics, your cumulative GPA, and the number of total credits you have earned throughout high school. Your transcript is sent directly from your high school to the college(s) you are applying to.

Timeline for College and Career Planning for Seniors

- August -** Narrow your college choices to 3-7 colleges you plan to apply to. Review college applications online and decide if you are going to use the college's application, the Common Application, or a paper application.
Register for the SAT, SAT II, or ACT if you plan to take them again. You should take these prior to December.
Watch for an email from the counseling office assigning you the task of completing the Senior Activities Survey. This survey asks you to list all of your school-related clubs, sports, and activities so they can be included on your official transcript that is sent to colleges.
- September -** **EARLY DECISION CANDIDATES: note the special deadlines for applying.**
Create a resume (you can do this using Naviance) and fill out the Counselor and Teacher Recommendation Request Forms. These will help your counselor and teachers write your recommendation letters.
Finish writing your college essay. The essay questions for the Common Application are good prompts to start with.
Pay attention to your email and the morning announcements, as you will receive notice when colleges come to visit your high school.
- October -** If you are required to take an SAT Subject test and you have not registered to do so, you must register for the December test date now. Begin filling out your college applications. Visit with college representatives who come to your school and don't forget about any college fairs that might be held in the area.
As soon as possible after October 1st, file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (**FAFSA**). Your parents will need to assist with this, as it requires information from their 2016-2017 income tax return.
- November -** Watch deadlines for Early Decision and Early Action applications. **All college applications should be completed by the Thanksgiving Holiday.** Last minute test dates must be considered by this time.
- December -** Last minute applications must be submitted before Christmas. Many regular deadline dates begin in early January.
- January -** Near the end of this month when the first semester ends, MID-YEAR GRADE REPORTS are available to be sent by the School Counseling Office. Mid-year reports are automatically sent to all

schools that you have applied to using the Common Application. If any colleges contact you specifically requesting your mid-year grades, please let Mrs. Vail or your school counselor know so this information can be sent in a timely manner. If you have canceled any college applications that you have already submitted, please let your school counselor know so that your mid-year transcript is not sent to those schools.

If you are required to submit a CSS Profile in addition to the FAFSA it should be done as soon as possible.

- February -** Local scholarship information is coming into the School Counseling Office. CHECK YOUR NAVIANCE ACCOUNT and EMAIL for information about these scholarships. Finalize these applications and submit them by the due date.
- March & -
April** Many colleges will be sending out their decision notices. If you are accepted by more than one college, select the one you intend to enroll in and confirm your decision by submitting the necessary paperwork. Write to or email the other colleges that accepted you and inform them of your decision not to attend their school and thank them for their interest in you.
- May -** May 1st is the deadline for submitting your deposit to a college. Deposits not submitted by this time will be viewed as a refusal of admission.

During the second semester of senior year, despite “senioritis” and “college acceptances,” it is important to maintain or improve your academic grades. Colleges may look unfavorably upon grades that drop drastically in the second half of senior year and **THEY HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO REVERSE A STUDENT’S ACCEPTANCE.**

Procedures for Applying to College

1. Explore the college application online, the Common Application, or call the college admissions office for an application form. **THIS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.** Make sure you read all instructions and download the necessary forms before submitting your application.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

While it may be common practice in your home country for families to hire agencies to complete your college applications for you, please note that most prestigious colleges in the United States frown upon this practice, as it indicates to them that you are not capable of completing an application on your own.

For an example, see Cornell University's position statement: "Cornell University expects all applicants to complete their application materials without the use of paid agents or credentialing services. *The use of such services violates University policy, and may lead to the rejection of application materials, the revocation of an admissions offer, cancellation of admission, or involuntary withdrawal from the University.*"

<http://admissions.cornell.edu/apply/international-students>

To ensure that none of our students are negatively affected by the use of an agency against a college's policy, the Notre Dame School Counseling office does not share students' transcripts or recommendation letters with any third-party agencies of this type.

2. **Read the instructions and the application carefully.** Supply all the information required from the applicant and parents. Follow the instructions for completing the application. Application fees typically range between \$35.00 and \$85.00 for each application. If you qualified for an SAT or ACT fee waiver, you also qualify for four (4) college application fee waivers. Some colleges also offer fee waivers for students who apply online or prior to a certain date. Don't be afraid to ask the admissions office about any fee waivers they might offer.
3. Seniors must submit their applications directly to the college to which they are applying. If a student wishes to have the school counselor review their application before mailing or submitting online, they can schedule an appointment with their counselor.

If the college requires SAT or ACT scores, the student must also request that these be sent directly to the college from the testing agency if you did not previously request it at the time of registration. SAT scores reports can be requested through your College Board account at www.collegeboard.org, while ACT score reports can be requested through your ACT Student account at

www.actstudent.org. The cost for sending scores after the initial free score report window has passed (approximately a week after you take the test) is \$12.00 per college for SAT scores and \$13.00 per college for ACT scores.

ALL APPLICATIONS REQUIRE AN OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT. *If you are applying to a self-reporting school (which will ask you to list all of the classes you have taken in high school and the grades you've earned in each), you will only need to request your final transcript after you have been accepted.* **All transcript requests are processed through Naviance.** It is the student's responsibility to keep their "Colleges I'm Applying To" list current, match their Naviance account to their Common App account if using the Common App for any applications, indicate in Naviance when they have actually submitted their application to each college, and complete the transcript request after they have submitted their portion of the application.

Steps for requesting transcripts:

1. Submit your application to the college (it is recommended that you do this first);
2. Add the college to your Colleges I'm Applying to list in Naviance and answer the questions that follow (If you've applied using the Common App, complete the Common App account matching tool at the top of your College's I'm Applying to page, then click the "Manage Transcript" link and click the red + (plus sign) to add you transcript request).
 - a) *App type:* Tell us if you're applying for an Early Action, Early Decision, or Priority deadline, or if the college uses Regular or Rolling admissions.
 - b) *I'll submit my application:* Tell us if you're using the Common App, Coalition App, or the college's own application (Direct to the institution) to apply.
 - c) *I've submitted my application:* Check this box if you have submitted your part of the application to the college.
 - d) *Click "ADD AND REQUEST TRANSCRIPT."* If you're adding the college to your list but you haven't yet submitted your application, you may want to just select "Add Application" and return later to request your transcript after you have submitted your application.
 - e) *What type of transcript are you requesting?*

Initial: This is the first type of transcript you will request, usually during the first half of the school year (Semester 1). It includes your classes and grades from 9th-11th grade, as well as the classes you are enrolled in for 12th grade.

Mid year: These transcripts may be requested after Semester 1 ends and your mid-year grades have been calculated (after you take your mid-term exams). Not all colleges want mid-year

transcripts, so be sure to research carefully and/or contact the admissions office to inquire.

Final: This transcript includes all courses and grades from all four years of high school, and shows the date that you graduated from Notre Dame High School (sometimes referred to as “proof of graduation”). This type of transcript should only be requested **ONCE**, and will only be sent to the college you have decided to attend. It will be sent **AFTER** graduation.

- f) *What additional materials, if any, do you want included?* The School Counseling office at Notre Dame High School **does not superscore, nor can we pick and choose certain test dates or test types to send.** Please note that if you select this option, ALL of your unofficial PSAT, SAT, ACT, and AP scores will be sent to the college. Furthermore, **because these scores are unofficial, students must ADDITIONALLY send their scores directly from the College Board (SAT and AP) or ACT Student in order for the college to consider your scores official and mark them as received.**
- g) *Click “Request and Finish.”*

It is important to note that it often takes colleges up to several weeks to process student transcripts and update their online databases, so if Naviance says your transcript was sent but your college portal still says it’s missing, the most likely explanation is that the college has not yet updated their database.

3. If teacher recommendations are required, choose your recommenders carefully and provide them with a Teacher Recommendation Request Form (this form can be found in the **document library** of your Naviance account) OR a printed copy of your typed answers to the Teacher Recommendation Request Survey (in Naviance) **at least 10-15 school days before the recommendation is due.** **Recommendations are processed through Naviance, so after you ask your teacher for a recommendation in person, you must also request the recommendation in your Naviance account by following these steps:**
1. On the Colleges page, select the “Letters of Recommendation” link;
 2. Click “Add Request;”
 3. Select the teacher who will write your recommendation from the drop-down menu;
 4. Select whether you want this teacher to send their letter to ALL of the colleges you apply to, or just a few (this is important because some colleges will only accept 1 recommendation; if you have requested recommendations from 2 teachers they will only accept the first recommendation that is submitted). Also, if you select the specific colleges option, you can see how many recommendations (if any) each college requires, and the maximum number they will accept;

5. Write a short request/thank you to the teacher;
6. Click "Submit Request."

After you have submitted this request, your teacher will write your recommendation letter, upload it to Naviance, and send it directly to the college themselves.

If any colleges that you are applying to require that recommendations be mailed to them (or if you are requesting recommendations from a coach or supervisor who is not listed in the teacher drop-down), please provide the individual with an addressed, stamped envelope to each college that requires this. Alternately, if you are using the Common App, coaches and supervisors can be invited to submit their recommendation electronically as "Other Recommenders" directly through the Common App.

When asking a teacher for a recommendation, be sure to mention the deadline date by which the recommendation is to be submitted. **Make sure you give your teachers at least three weeks advance notice when requesting a recommendation.**

DO NOT FORGET to **thank** those teachers who write letters of recommendation for you. A handwritten note or card is always appreciated.

NOT ALL COLLEGES ASK FOR RECOMMENDATIONS.

Seniors are encouraged to complete their applications prior to the Thanksgiving Holiday. Therefore, all necessary materials should be requested and submitted to the school counseling department by the second week of November.

ESSAY AND/OR PERSONAL STATEMENT. Some colleges require an essay and/or a personal statement as part of the application process. Others make the essay optional. Colleges use this as a further means of self-expression by which to make admissions decisions. It is advisable to go over the rough copy with an English teacher before submitting your good copy to the college. Keep a copy of your finished essay. It may be used for other applications.

Any paper applications should be printed neatly or typed. Some applications even specify the color of ink to use. **NEVER USE PENCIL UNLESS INSTRUCTED TO DO SO. NEVER USE TWO DIFFERENT COLORED INKS.**

SUMMARY

- 1) Meet all Deadlines. They mean what they say.
- 2) Keep copies of what you submit whenever possible.
- 3) Allow at least two (2) weeks for the school counseling office to complete your counselor recommendation letters and process your transcript requests. Remember, the applications are processed on a first-come basis.
- 4) Give teachers at least three (3) weeks advance notice for writing a letter of recommendation.
- 5) INFORM the teachers who have written your letters of recommendation about the admission decisions you receive from colleges to which you have applied. **DON'T FORGET TO THANK THEM.**
- 6) Keep the counseling department informed of admission decisions and scholarship offers. When you get an acceptance or scholarship letter, bring it in to the counseling office! We will include you on our Brag Board in the hallway, and you may even be featured on the Notre Dame Facebook page if you give permission!
- 7) In the spring, INFORM all colleges that accepted you whether or not you will attend.
- 8) **DEADLINES, DEADLINES, DEADLINES!**

APPENDIX

SAMPLE LETTER/EMAIL
REQUESTING COLLEGE INFORMATION

Date

Director of Admissions
(College Name)
Address

Dear Admissions Counselor:

I am currently a student at Notre Dame High School in Easton, Pennsylvania and I plan to graduate in June of _____.

At the present time, I am interested in pursuing a career in the field of (college major) and eventually hope to be a (career name). Therefore, I would like to request any information you could send me about your (college major) program and your college in general. I am also interested in learning more about your financial aid opportunities and scholarships, so any information in this area would be appreciated.

I would like to thank you in advance for your help and cooperation and I anxiously await your reply.

Sincerely,

(Your Signature)

(Your Name) Printed
Your Address
Your email

**SAMPLE LETTER/EMAIL
REQUESTING AN INTERVIEW**

Date

Director of Admissions
(College Name)
Address of College
City, State, Zip

Dear Admissions Counselor:

I am a senior at Notre Dame High School, in Easton, Pennsylvania and I am planning to visit (name of college) between (date range). As I am interested in applying for your (college major) program for the Fall of 20____, I would appreciate having an interview and tour of the campus on either (date #1) or (date #2) if possible. I will also be applying for financial aid and would appreciate an opportunity to have an interview with a representative from the financial aid office on the same day.

If these dates are inconvenient, I would be able to visit on (date #3). I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your name Signed
Your name Typed
Your Address
Your Email

**SAMPLE LETTER/EMAIL
WITHDRAWING AN APPLICATION**

Sometimes circumstances intervene which make it necessary for a student to withdraw an application even before he/she received a decision from a college. Again, it is polite to inform the college of this intention.

DATE

Director of Admissions
Name of College
Address of College
City, State, Zip

Dear Admissions Counselor:

I am a senior at Notre Dame High School in Easton, Pennsylvania.

My application for admission to (name of college) has been filed with you. Since my plans for higher education have changed recently, I would like to withdraw my application for admission at this time.

Please accept my thanks for your assistance and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature Signed

Your Name Printed or Typed
Your Address
Your email