



College Advising
Summer 2019

12th Grade Packet

Included in this packet:

- Letter from College Advising
- 12th Grade College Advising Overview
- What's Due When
- Next Steps for College Applicants
- Demonstrating Interest to Colleges
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- Common Application Reference Guide



Greetings 12th Graders and their support networks!

Summer 2019

We hope this letter finds you well and enjoying your summer! We write again with updates regarding 12th graders' college processes in advance of senior year. We know (hope!) many of you have other *non-college* fun planned this summer, so please consider this a necessary but informal barometer check on the drafts of projects due September 3 and on which we'll continue to work this fall. The information accompanying this letter is long and detailed but we have found in the past that this collection of documents has answered many questions. If you find you have additional questions, always please feel free to email your College Advisor. The College Advising staff looks forward to reengaging in person with rising 12th graders once they and College Advising reemerge at the end of August.

In addition to the large e-packet College Advising emailed in May to students and families, as well as posted on Naviance, we re-sent here some of the items previously received as well as new items to support the college-related work students are doing for fall:

- "College Advising Overview": A College Advising-specific calendar from now until graduation.
- "What's Due When?": An overview of College Advising deadlines that spread out work and keep applicants on track.
- "Next Steps": Slightly more detailed than "What's Due When?" but with similar information for those who seek specifics.
- "Demonstrating Interest to Colleges": outlining communication with colleges on the eventual college list. There are quite a few ways to do this, many of which have no cost, so please see the sheet for the rationale behind and suggestions for making it apparent to colleges (*perhaps most importantly safer ones*) that one would consider attending.
- "Standardized Testing in a Nutshell": continues to answer questions about standardized testing.
- "Common Application Reference Guide": A re-sent tip-sheet for completing a *draft* of the main part of the Common Application, one of the projects due September 3.
 - Attempt to complete the Common Application (www.commonapp.org) if applying to one or more schools included on it (information about which schools are on the Common Application appears in Naviance as well as on the Common Application site) or complete another non-Common application to a favorite college if not. Please do not use the Coalition Application for any college aside from University of Washington without checking first with College Advising.
 - We'll review the draft of your Common Application with students, so students please include the Common Application username and password in the Naviance survey also due September 3 and expected before you schedule your individual back-to-school meeting. We'll keep the information confidential and use it to review your work.

The Class of 2020 should be prepared in September to review 1) completed summer assignments and 2) proposed colleges on their possible college list, identifying around ten favorites of varying degrees of selectivity (using the categories Naviance provides and which we connect over the summer to each of the schools in your Naviance list, this might look like two "safeties," two "likelies," two "possibles," two "reaches," and two "far reaches"), a percentage of which may form the college list due in October. Keep in mind our previous advice that a good Early Decision strategy is usually to apply to a college we characterize relative to you as a "reach" but not necessarily as a "far reach" ("possibles" can also be effective in this respect). Again, it's very important not to delete any colleges from your "thinking about" list. We are happy to explain any of the above – again, please let us know anytime if you have questions!

Parents and guardians should also please mark their calendars for two evening events. On **September 11 at 7 PM** in the theater, a trusted college financial aid colleague will review financial aid processes for all interested Seattle Academy families. Repeating information students will receive during various grade level meetings, on **October 3 at 7 PM**, College Advising will answer common questions and review specific, practical ways parents and College Advising work together to best effect. During important 12th grade class meetings, we will share with students messages critical to their applications. Class meeting attendance is mandatory.

We add here briefly a preview of information available later this summer. While most Seattle Academy students don't take nor need to take Advanced Placement (AP) exams, a handful do each year. College Board is changing the registration procedure for AP tests. We will share related information with the class and post it both in Naviance and on the SAAS 12th grade page.

Our system is set up such that there is no such thing as a College Advising emergency. We work with students and with families to plan far in advance, providing a great deal of information and context, much of which is included here. When in doubt, after reading our materials, please feel free to direct questions to us (and not to your next door neighbor, unless we live next door to you). We have a great deal of experience and while we cannot guarantee outcomes or always provide the information students and parents hope to hear, we will always do our responsible, informed best on behalf of students. We are already very fond of the Class of 2020 and look forward to continued work with this rising 12th grade class.

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Seattle Academy College Advising



College Advising 12th Grade Overview

August 1, 2019	Colleges that Change Lives information session and fair, 7 PM; www.ctcl.org ; pre-registration not required.
August 16, 2019	Deadline for next ACT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register); www.actstudent.org
August 24, 2019	SAT administration; www.collegeboard.org
September 3, 2019	Deadline - summer projects outlined in emails sent out to rising 12th graders and families in May and over the summer.
	Individual student College Advising meetings resume one students' fall schedules are set/unchanging
September 5, 2019	Deadline for next SAT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register); www.collegeboard.org
Early September	College representative visits and information sessions begin and continue into December. Posted on the wall in College Advising and on Naviance. Individual reminders sent through Naviance and in weekly emails to the 12 th grade.
September 11, 2019	Guide to College Financing with Bryan Gould, Associate Director of Student Financial Services (and former college admission officer), 7 PM, Theater
September 14, 2019	ACT administration www.actstudent.org
September 17, 2019	Seattle Performing and Visual Arts College Fair, Fisher Pavilion at Seattle Center, 6:30-8:30 PM; Google for details
September 27, 2019	Deadline for ACT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register); www.actstudent.org
October 1, 2019	Last day to request a teacher recommendation (end of school last year was the recommended deadline)
	Ensure your colleges and deadlines are accurate in Naviance by this date.
	FAFSA available January 1 for completion at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Research specific colleges' financial aid requirements.
October 2, 2019	Deadline for SAT registration without late fee (don't wait to register); www.collegeboard.org
October 3, 2019	12th grade parent meeting, largely college-related, Theater
October 5, 2019	SAT administration; www.collegeboard.org
October 6, 2019	Seattle Area Independent School College Fair, 3:00 PM, Seattle University
November 1-2, 2019	National (NACAC) College Fair, Washington State Convention & Trade Center. Check specific times at www.nacacnet.org . College reps unable to interview during fair.
October 26, 2019	ACT administration; www.actstudent.org
November 1, 2019	Popular application deadline for many early action, early decision, and priority applications.
November 2, 2019	SAT administration; www.collegeboard.org
November 7, 2019	Deadline for SAT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register); www.collegeboard.org
November 8, 2019	Deadline for ACT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register); www.actstudent.org
November 9, 2019	National Portfolio Day; https://nationalportfolioday.org/event/seattle-wa-november-9th/
November 11, 2019	Veteran's Day, no classes – good day to see colleges or work on applications.
December 7, 2019	SAT administration; www.collegeboard.org
December 12-13, 2019	12 th grade retreat
December 14, 2019	ACT administration; www.actstudent.org
December 16, 2019	Last day to give College Advising long or short answers for review that have deadlines on or before January 1 (i.e. anything due to colleges over winter break). This ensures proper turnaround in time for deadlines over break.
	Also, target for adding colleges with deadlines over winter break to ensure transmission of support materials before we close for break (it's fine if we submit transcripts and recommendations after break as long as student app is on time)
December 20-	Noon dismissal, winter break. College advising closed during this time.
January 7, 2020	
February 1, 2020	Regardless of deadline, even if seemingly later, complete all applications by February 1
February 17-21, 2020	Mid-winter break, College Advising closed during this time, consider visiting colleges during this break
April 3, 2020	Yukon Trip leaves; College Advising closed for work and personal travel April 6-April 19; no connectivity during this time
April TBD, 2020	PNACAC College Fair, Connolly Center, Seattle University, Connolly Center. This event is not organized by Seattle Academy and families need not register beforehand.
May 1, 2020	National Candidates' Reply Date, date by which all students commit to only one college.
May 5, 2020	12th Grade Transition to College Night (for Parents), Theater.
June 2, 2020	Graduation (June dates are tentative)

Testing dates remain subject to change and confirmation.

Please confirm any updates to testing and testing registration dates at:

<http://www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html>

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-us-dates>

SENIORS: WHAT'S DUE WHEN?

NON-NEGOTIABLE DEADLINES FOR SENIORS

What you send/arrange

Your application (plus supplements, if applicable)
Test scores directly from the testing agencies (not if applying test-optional)
Your application fees
Any necessary materials/résumés/portfolios/advanced screening recordings/auditions for arts admission, robotics, athletic recruiting, etc.

What we send with proper notice and information

Your official transcript
Your counselor letter/forms and your teacher letter/forms
Your "secondary school report" (we have our own form for this)
A "school profile"
Information describing discipline disclosure policy
Information describing award policy at Seattle Academy

Over the Summer

Continue to research schools and add your own discoveries to your list. Email your college advisor to get a sense of whether these additions are "safeties," "likelies," "possibles," "reaches" or "far reaches" (the five Naviance categories).

Work on tasks below due September 3. College Advising has help sheets associated with each but also stores them in the Naviance Document Library. It is also common for students to revisit test prep for standardized test administrations that restart in August.

Early September

College reps begin visiting, through Thanksgiving! You will receive alerts via Naviance re: schools on your various lists.

September 3

- ✓ Submit via email to your College Advisor an **essay draft**, as polished as you can (include corrections your teachers already suggested to all essays before we see them – thanks!).
- ✓ At commonapp.org, **fill out a Common Application**. You may also choose a different application for a favorite school that doesn't use the Common Application. Our expectation is you would *only* use the new(er) Coalition Application for UW and for no other colleges (check with College Advisor). Share your account log-in information with College Advising during a meeting or in the summer survey (below). In a fall meeting, you and your College Advisor will ensure you have properly waived your rights to see teacher and counselor recommendations (something that strengthens your application).
- ✓ Complete the **"Seniors in September" survey** on Naviance (best to complete later in summer).
- ✓ Complete the **Application Planning Checklist** using our handout as a guide, including schools on your near-final college list. Send as attachment to your College Advisor.
- ✓ Schedule **individual meeting** with your college advisor. These occur throughout September. Be sure to include in your meeting request the best blocks in general for you to meet *once your first tri schedule is firm*.
- ✓ Plan to **bring to that meeting** ten favorite colleges, **two from each of the following categories** you'll see tagged on your "Colleges I'm thinking about..." page in Naviance sometime in mid-June: safety (2), likely (2), possible (2), reach (2), far reach (2). A strategic choice for an ED school is often from the "possible" or "reach" group but not from the "far reach" group.

October 1

- ✓ Last day to enter a preliminary college list in Naviance. This elicits feedback from College Advising on your list and ensures teachers are clear on what's due when for you. No support materials will mail to these colleges unless listed properly in the "Colleges I'm applying to..." list in Naviance. **DO NOT delete colleges from the "Colleges I'm Thinking About" list under any circumstances.** We can explain, but please honor our request on this one.
- ✓ Last day to request teacher recommendation (we highly recommend asking between May 1 and the end of junior year), emailing College Advisor to confirm. We'll take care of the rest. **Do not** enter this person (or us) into your Common App.
- ✓ First day to apply for federal financial aid: <https://fafsa.ed.gov/> Check financial aid requirements for your colleges and determine whether any require CSS Profile or other institutional forms. <https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>

Monday, December 16

- ✓ **Last day to give your college advisor anything that requires review before the end of winter break.** In other words, if you have deadlines that fall between 12/20 (dismissal for break) and return from break, 12/16 is the last day to solicit feedback for those applications. After break, we can return to reviewing materials for those colleges with deadlines *after* break.
- ✓ Last day to tell your college advisor any additions to your college list *and* have documents to support them sent before January 7. Otherwise, support materials sent after January 7.

December 20 at noon-January 7: Seattle Academy winter break: College Advising closed. **No application mailing or feedback during this time. You will have all of the information and support you need to plan ahead. Thanks!**



NEXT STEPS FOR 11TH GRADE SPRING / SUMMER / 12TH GRADE FALL

We share the following during the 11th grade spring and again as a reminder over the summer before 12th grade year. As summer begins, most students have already reached the bottom of page one but it is a good idea to recheck tasks to make certain students are on track. Homework due mostly via email to College Advising the day after Labor Day (Tuesday, September 3, 2019) is largely at the top of page two. We discuss this with the class in May.

- ❑ If you have not already, **complete your Naviance questionnaire**. Email Stacie Cone at scone@seattleacademy.org if you forgot your Naviance password or can't log-in. Email the college advisor listed in your Naviance account when your questionnaire is finished along with your 1-8 schedule as well as the best blocks you can meet occasionally with teacher permission.
- ❑ Take notes on your favorite schools and what you like about them. **Email your college advisor when this is done** for a follow-up conversation about preferences.
- ❑ Leave all schools in your *Colleges I'm Thinking About* List, and **don't delete any**. That brainstorming list is an important history of what we've discussed. Instead, what you'll do later in the year (September, with your college advisor) is move some schools to the *Colleges I'm Applying To* list without deleting any from your Naviance account. This helps us know the history of our conversation and return to old suggestions if needed.
- ❑ Make wise choices with your college advisor about course selection for fall. This is a great topic of spring meetings.
- ❑ In addition to scheduling spring standardized testing, **reserve the appropriate future Saturdays in August/fall for standardized testing**. During the spring, you can find these dates on the ACT and College Board (SAT) websites. You can check to see whether your schools require SAT subject exams at the SAT Subject Test requirements link on the left-hand side of your Naviance home page (SAT II requirements) but be sure to check with your college advisor to see if you should actually spend time and energy on the SAT Subject Tests. Take the ACT "with writing" in lieu of SAT IIs if your colleges allow. Do note that substantial prep beforehand is needed for any SAT Subject Test taken by any student from any high school. Free SAT prep, for example, is available through Khan Academy on the College Board website.
- ❑ As you make travel plans, both for spring break or for the summer, keep us posted on the specific schools you plan to see. If you know you'll be in a certain city, and you share the possible college visits with us, we can make sure the visit plan is **appropriate and balanced**, also visiting enough safer schools. This will ensure you're seeing colleges that maximize your time and money, and colleges where admission is more likely than not.
- ❑ **No earlier than May 1** but before the end of school, complete the two-step process requesting teacher recommendations. The first is an **in-person teacher request**. Choose **two teachers** from your regular academic subjects and ask them to write your recommendations. The general suggestion is that the teachers at least be from two different subject areas and usually from the humanities (English, history or language) and from STEM. Also, if you are deeply involved with vocal music or theater, for example, that would be your third and final recommendation request, but your primary focus should be on the two core academic teachers. The majority of students find two recommendations are sufficient (more can look like overkill).
- ❑ Sometimes teachers might ask you to complete a questionnaire, sit down for an appointment, or give them more information before they say yes. **Take active steps on teachers' requests**, keeping your college advisor informed about what's happening with your teacher recommendations.
- ❑ The second and required step regarding teacher recommendations is to make sure to **email your college advisor as soon as the teacher says yes** so your college advisor can make the teacher rec "official" in your Naviance account (again, an important and required step that keeps teachers informed of deadlines and allows teachers to upload their letters on time come fall).
- ❑ In May, 11th graders receive a large electronic communication from College Advising that repeats much of this and answers many parent questions. If your family is asking you a lot of questions, a good place to direct them is the spring (and summer) College Advising letter/materials.
- ❑ Read through this to-do list. Do you have questions? Especially about items due between now and October 1? Email your college advisor questions anytime. We meet with the class during a regular class meeting on Monday, May 6 when Alison spends the majority of the meeting talking about short and long answer writing for colleges. At that meeting we also ensure everyone is up to speed on summer projects.
- ❑ In addition to college advising assignments below and **due in September the day after Labor Day**, your main task for summer is to research and consider enough information about the initial Naviance list to return prepared to discuss a vastly whittled down list. While this can be done without visiting schools, **constructing a balanced final list** requires research of college offerings and some plain old reflection on part of students.
- ❑ As summer begins, make sure you've read through the summer projects listed below, due the day after Labor Day. In the past, many students have found it helpful to **reserve a week of August** to complete these projects. The assignments are not such that you can save them for the night before. Planning ahead now, or even starting on some in the spring, will definitely make this entire process less painful and more satisfying.
- ❑ **Create an account at www.commonapp.org**. Save the username and password in a safe place.
 - When you create a Common Application, an important first step is to grant us permission to send support materials (transcripts, recommendations) on your behalf. This part of the Common Application is a little counter-intuitive. To complete this important step, fill out the Education section completely and then click "Assign Recommenders." **Do not assign any Seattle Academy recommenders here**, rather this is where you **complete a waiver that gives us permission** to send materials for you. (This detail was true as of the revision of this document; let us know if you find something different.) When asked, you should **waive your right to see any recommendations** (not seeing your letters gives your recommendations way more credibility). If in doubt we can also do/check this part together in September. (see next page/other side – thanks!)

- ❏ Due September 3 (*will require starting in summer*). **Revise or write a draft of an essay** for the Common Application or for a favorite school. As we mentioned above, Alison leads the class in essay tips during a May class meeting and we send in May/post our “Thinking About Your Essay” handout in your Naviance account (Naviance Home > document library (over on the right) > Due in September). As you prepare to send this draft to a college advisor, consider whether your draft addresses the questions at the bottom of the document.
- ❏ Due September 3 (*will require starting in summer*). **Complete a *draft* of the Common Application or an application to a favorite school.** Save the draft. Let your college advisor know you’re ready to have it reviewed. This is one document of many you and your college advisor will exchange for feedback. If you attended the spring Case Studies program we organized with Bush, U Prep, and Northwest, draw on what you learned about what makes a strong application.
- ❏ Due September 3 (*will require starting in summer*). **Fill out “Thinking About Your Application Planning Checklist,”** saved on Naviance (see below), using the schools you think are most likely to appear on your relatively final application list.
 - (Naviance > home > document library (over on the right) > Due in September). Fill in this document such that you bring back a proposal of ten favorite colleges, two per each College Advising-designated (in Naviance) category: safety, likely, possible, reach, and far reach. Those we designate as reach schools tend to be better and more strategic binding Early Decision choices than those designated “far reach” but this is highly individualized and you’ll strategize about this with your college advisor.
- ❏ Due September 3. **Complete the “12th Graders in September” survey on Naviance.** This is best completed as summer ends and information is up-to-date. (This is also a good time to make sure you’ve “signed” the Common Application waiver described above. Thanks!)
- ❏ Most college applications require an activities list and a handful allow a résumé. In the above survey, you will also list out your activities such that you will have a “bank” of them to include when you fill out your applications. While *not* due to us, we will post résumé information in this folder as well in case you need to complete a résumé for one or more colleges, for your job, or for your eventual Senior Project.
- ❏ Due September 3. Once you have your official fall schedule, **email College Advising your schedule to set up a back to school meeting.** Typically at this meeting you’ll start first with a discussion of your proposed college list. In June, the college advising team reviewed your college list with all up-to-date information and identified which schools are reaches, safeties, and so on. As mentioned above, you should return to this meeting with a proposal of ten favorites, two per “category” identified by College Advising. If you have questions about the Common App, refer to our Common Application reference guide. The guide details each step of the Common Application roughly in order and answers most common questions.
- ❏ Attend College Advising’s **Guide to College Financing Night** in the fall in the theater (details forthcoming). If applying for need based financial aid, start preparing with your family the materials needed to **file for federal financial aid by October 1** at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- ❏ **FINAL LIST DEADLINE #1 - October 1:** *If you have a November 1 deadline of any type*, your application list is “set” by this date in Naviance.
 - **To put applications on your application list officially**, click the boxes next to your future application schools on the “colleges I’m thinking about” page and then click “move to application list.” Choose the “type” of application (“early action,” “regular,”). Our preference is “early action” or “priority” when available, then “regular decision,” then “rolling.” We can practice doing this together during our fall meeting.
 - By October 1, **ensure the college names and application deadlines in your Common Application account match Naviance information.** (If a school uses the Common App, apply using the Common App.) If applying via the Common Application, the only way we can send your transcript and your recommendations to that school is if you have added that school to your Common Application account.
- ❏ Fall: Work to complete applications, sending your college advisor materials to review no less than one week before any due date, usually more.
 - Send your college advisor drafts of short answers and essays to review. Note: Your college advisor attempts to read each draft only twice, so make sure that your first attempt is proofed and college-ready enough that you’re getting the most helpful possible feedback for round two. **There is always a one week turnaround on any application document sent to College Advising for review.**
 - For all Common Applications: The system “holds” all support materials (teacher recs, counselor rec, transcript) until *the student* has hit “send” on their application to a particular school. At that time, all of the support materials held in limbo join the student’s materials.
 - **If you are applying to an Early Decision school, you need to work ahead before winter break on all *other* applications due over winter break** such that if disappointed in the Early Decision outcome (again, around December 15) you are not caught off-guard with work for other applications unfinished going into winter break. This also allows the student to receive feedback on work before College Advising is closed for winter break.
- ❏ **The Monday before we leave for winter break:** To ensure proper turnaround, this is the **last day to give college advisors long or short answers to review that have deadlines during or before winter break.** If received by Monday, December 16, we will return writing due during winter break by the day we leave for break (Friday, December 20). If not received by Monday, December 16, we will still return it, only after winter break.
 - Also by this Monday (December 16), please notify us of any additions to your college list. We will send transcripts and recommendation letters to any additional colleges if aware of them before break.
- ❏ **College Advising is closed over winter break without email access during that time**, so plan ahead. Again, if you decide to add colleges while the office is closed for winter break, College Advising can follow-up with materials for additional schools once back in January provided *the applicant* is on time with their application. Thanks!



DEMONSTRATING INTEREST TO COLLEGES

At a time when more colleges participate in the Common Application, and the instinct is to submit more applications to guard against unpredictability in admission (for the record, the average number of applications submitted by Seattle Academy seniors is seven), it's important for colleges to have information that helps them determine which of their applicants is the most likely to enroll. One technique by which applicants can do so is "demonstrating interest."

Demonstrating interest does not mean you bake and mail cookies to every college on your list. Instead, demonstrating interest transmits to the college some sense that you have researched and attempted to understand the specific colleges to which you will apply. Call it **"demonstrated understanding."** While demonstrating interest *does not guarantee admission*, doing so can help a college understand that you would take its offer of admission seriously.

Because your safety and target schools are generally the most essential schools on your list, and because you may decide between favorites during spring of senior year that you do not know are favorites now, you should demonstrate interest at all of the schools on your final list (the one you'll confirm with College Advising in September), not only at those that are reaches and beyond. In political terms, this is "taking care of your base."

You need not do all of the following. You need not throw tons of money at this project. You can, however, choose and complete some of the following for each of your colleges. "Demonstrating interest" will look different, college-to-college, applicant-to-applicant.

Possibilities:

- ✓ Looking at your "colleges I'm thinking about" list in Naviance, send a short, proofread email to each of the colleges asking to be put on mailing lists. An easy way to start is by saying, "My college advisor initially suggested your school, and further research confirmed my interest. Please include me on your mailing list..."
- ✓ Provide accurate email, snail mail, and phone contact information, *reading and acting on emails/mailings when they arrive*, especially from your favorite schools. You may be given the means to set up and sign-in to an online portal. You should set up and access this. It is also where you will check the status of your application, possibly learn of your admission decision, and possibly pay your enrollment deposit.
- ✓ Actually check the email accounts in which you will receive emails from colleges and actively respond to emails that are intended for you specifically or that advertise things like interviews and hotel receptions in Seattle.
- ✓ Many colleges do track whether emails are opened and whether (or even how) students spend time on colleges' websites. While we don't condone these practices, they do exist and it is our responsibility to tell you about them. You should open emails from and spend time on the websites of colleges to which you plan to apply, giving equal attention to safer and "target" colleges.
- ✓ Contact the admission offices of colleges on your list and ask if they plan to interview or host receptions in Seattle. Ask the best way to make arrangements to interview/attend.
- ✓ After asking permission first of the impacted teacher, plan to attend the high school presentations that colleges schedule here at SAAS. If you can't attend a session, stop by before class to say hi to the rep, or ask College Advising for the rep's contact information so you can send an email afterward.
- ✓ Visit colleges, arranging your time on campus directly through the office of admission. This is easy to do by calling admission directly or by arranging a visit through the colleges' admission or campus visit home pages. Do at least one activity (tour, class, lunch, overnight, interview if available) through the Office of Admission. Know that Seattle Academy students typically interview well, especially after reading the interviewing help sheet we provide.
- ✓ Attend a college fair (see College Advising calendar) and be sure to fill out inquiry cards if available at the tables of your colleges.
- ✓ Complete athletic questionnaires on college athletics pages if considering playing sports in college.
- ✓ Research and make arrangements for auditions if planning on pursuing performing arts in college.
- ✓ Send a thank you note or email after you've visited a college met a college representative, and/or sent your application to a college.
- ✓ Engage in online chats sponsored by your colleges.
- ✓ Don't tweet negatively, or talk online thoughtlessly, about a college. Colleges monitor how their names are used publicly.
- ✓ Ensure that you give time and thought to each "college specific" question on the Common Application. These are the questions that the colleges feel are important to ask in addition to the Common Application essay. Colleges take serious the energy, vividness, and specificity you put into them.
- ✓ Continue to gain information about your colleges such that you can respond to application questions such as "Why College X?" or "Tell us the various ways you engaged with College Y as an applicant" (both real questions). Rather than send generic responses, you'll want to be armed with specifics that show both research and candor. You can also return to "Initially, my college advisor suggested College Z," which signals that someone who knew you and knew the college connected the dots. Show how you gained an understanding of why you will contribute to a particular campus *as that campus seems to understand itself* (telegraphed through its own promotional materials).
- ✓ If asked for books you read in the past year, some of the books should include those related to your stated areas of academic interest.
- ✓ If deferred or wait-listed, affirmatively respond that you still want to be considered, providing new information that strengthens your application beyond when it was originally read.

How to keep track of all these demonstrations of interest? We'll ask you to keep track of the colleges to which you'll apply including their deadlines, essay questions, and application formats. You can do this in our Application Planning Checklist document, in a spreadsheet, in a Word document, in your phone, in a notebook, or in another format of your choosing. Be sure to note whether and when you've demonstrated interest to each college you include.



Standardized Testing Overview

How does test prep work?

Research shows ideally students should not take standardized tests, apart from those practice tests we administer, nor generally prep for them for the first two years of high school. It is best strategically if most test prep can wait until eleventh grade. While this is a hard line to hold, most early prep tends to be inefficient and unproductive. When it's actually time to prep, coaching toward tests works *until it doesn't*, meaning that students should give the tests their due – with appropriate and smart prep for a finite period of time – and not one second more. Test prep can be one-on-one, small group, or online through something like Khan Academy/College Board, which is free to users. Because students do not have unlimited time and motivation for test prep, studies show that applying time and energy **to homework first** pays the greatest dividends in college admission (and sometimes carries over to standardized tests).

What are the different standardized tests most college applicants take?

When the time comes, students ideally take a practice test that determines whether one or the other of the following is “their test.” For less than half of the students, however, will there be a clear choice between the following (ACT or SAT) which colleges accept equally. Still, one may feel more comfortable in terms of structure, pacing, and cadence. Ultimately the student should avoid testing whiplash by picking a test and sticking with it.

ACT – Has at least equal market share with the SAT; colleges accept it and SAT equally. The ACT is most like the practice test Seattle Academy students took in ninth grade. Like all tests it requires some prep - not ad nauseam, but perhaps in the eight weeks preceding the actual administration. Though some colleges are eliminating the “writing” portion, for the time being register for it “with writing.”

SAT – Like the ACT, colleges accept it equally. The SAT is most like the practice test Seattle Academy students take in October of tenth and eleventh grades. Like all tests it requires some prep - not ad nauseam, but perhaps in the eight weeks preceding the actual administration. In case one or more of your colleges requires it, elect to do the essay section.

SAT II – Fortunately, because of the considerable prep involved for any student from any high school, the SAT IIs or “subject tests” are less and less required by colleges. As of the last draft of this document, only thirteen colleges required subject tests. These requirements change frequently and College Advising monitors them. Students should not assume they have to take subject tests nor that it is in their best interest to take them or to spend time prepping for them. You will determine this individually with your college advisor when you work together in your junior year. Note: A few students taking pre-calc as early as sophomore year may elect to take the SAT II “Math 2” exam at the conclusion of that course. All other students can wait to discuss the SAT II until junior year conversations with College Advising.

Again, shouldn't I just take the SAT subject tests to cover my bases?

Because all students from all high schools require extra, sometimes extensive prep on the subject tests (which can distract from other schoolwork, activities, and regular test prep) it is wise first to see if you need them. Especially if you are a student with high testing but low grades, spend the energy instead on your transcript. Fewer and fewer colleges outright require them and you want to have as much time available for application-strengthening grades, activities, and life. Your College Advisor can put this into perspective and you can also check regularly updated SAT II requirements at:

<http://www.compassprep.com/subject-test-requirements-and-recommendations/>

When do students test and how many times?

Typically students take one SAT and one ACT in the winter or spring of junior year. Some test prep providers can also “diagnose” which test is the exam of focus. Students prep during junior winter/spring or during the summer before senior year, focusing especially on the test that felt or went better for them, and retaking that test in the fall. It is not recommended to test more than three times on a single exam, and for most students two attempts is sufficient.

When the time comes junior winter/spring, how do I register for tests and what do I do if I have accommodations?

Families register for the tests at www.actstudent.org (ACT) or www.collegeboard.org (SAT), setting up accounts with usernames and passwords you'll need to save and re-access when you send your scores to colleges in the fall. Especially for summer administrations which can fill up, early registration is important to ensure preferred testing location. If you know or believe you will use accommodations but have not yet checked with Learning Support, contact Jaymie Lewis at jlewis@seattleacademy.org.

When is the last time I should test during my senior fall?

Most of the Class of 2019 had at least one application due on or before November 1, meaning that the October test dates were the most useful to and generally latest advisable for them. Not waiting to test too far into the fall and making use of August, September and October test dates are good ideas. Some students also retested in November, using subsequent scores to strengthen regular admission applications.

What is test optional admission and how is it useful to me?

Around 1000 colleges outlined at www.fairtest.org openly weigh other factors than testing more strongly when reviewing applications, sometimes do not require tests at all, or allow students to substitute other work (graded paper, etc.) for standardized testing. The good news is that many test optional colleges are already favorites of Seattle Academy students. Test optional admission is ideal when one's transcript is quite strong and testing doesn't quite match.



SEATTLE ACADEMY COMMON APPLICATION REFERENCE GUIDE

The information and order of this guide is based on review and College Advising's test-completion of the **2018-2019 Common Application** (www.commonapp.org). 12th graders, before you start the Common Application, **please first check your list of favorite colleges** to ensure it makes sense for you to complete this application. For the September 3 deadline, you might find it's a better use of your time to complete a different application (once available) for a favorite non-Common Application school. Note: Many of your other, non-Common applications will ask these questions, possibly in a similar order, so **use this also as a reference for applications in general**.

As we all work through the process together, it's likely students and College Advising will identify additional questions and "work-arounds" for the Common App. We will share these updates as we identify them. Students, thank you in advance for continuing to send your questions after you read through this guide and see if it answers them.

When completing the Common Application, please fill out the basic, "general" part of the Common Application (the part your colleges share that makes it "common," under the "Common App" tab at the top of your home page), as well as **search and add** specific Common Application-member colleges and universities to your account to determine their additional questions and requirements. As suggested above, you might find that not all of your colleges are on the Common Application, in which case you'll want to seek their individual applications using a quick web search ("University of X application"). When you add schools to your Common Application account, you'll see that some schools have **additional, school-specific questions** (sometimes informally referred to as "supplements") each college wants you to answer. This will help you plan ahead for the full range of work necessary to submit all of your applications. Note that **none of your schools see any of your information until you pay and hit send**, something you should try to do **two days before a deadline**, in case there are technical glitches.

Basic steps required to create a Common Application account and add colleges:

1. Create an account at www.commonapp.org, setting up an account as an applicant, not as a recommender or member
2. Click **College Search** to add your colleges here. You don't need to fill out all of the information about the college to find it under "College Search." Sometimes the search works best if you put in only a small part of a college's name or the college's state. For example, entering only "Midd" generated both Middlebury College and Wesleyan University which is in Middletown, CT. You can go back and enter more or different schools later after you've completed the required Application Planning Grid and talked in September with your college advisor.

Now you're ready to start filling out the application!

1. Click the **Common App** tab.
2. Once you do, answer all questions under each item at left (Profile, Family, Education, Testing, Activities, Writing), asking a family member if you need their help in answering family-related questions. We'll help answer common questions in each of the following sections.

Section #1: Profile

- Name: Use your LEGAL name and ensure it is consistent with how you have signed up for testing and how it appears on Seattle Academy documents, like your grades and Naviance account. Have a preferred nickname? Put this in the "preferred name" area, provided you truly want to be called that name throughout the entire admission process. Please be consistent across forms and with standardized testing.
- Email (under Contact Details): Use an appropriately named (nothing questionable) account you actually check regularly (then check it).
- Demographics: Do include ethnicities with which you genuinely, regularly identify.
- When asked about "proficiency" in a world language, note that you do not have to be fluent to indicate that you are proficient. If you are comfortable indicating proficiency in a language you took while at Seattle Academy, it is fine to list that here.
- Citizenship: Once you enter your citizenship, you will be prompted to enter your Social Security Number. While this answer is optional, if you are a US Citizen and you're considering applying for financial aid, you are required to list your SSN.
- Common App Fee Waiver: There are specific requirements for eligibility for this waiver, consistent with fee waivers for standardized tests. If you aren't sure whether or not you qualify for a fee waiver, talk with your college advisor.

Second #2: Family

- This section asks various questions about your family status, employment history, occupation(s), and siblings. Please speak to your family to answer this question thoroughly and accurately.

Section #3: Education

- Current or Most Recent School: For consistency's sake, use "Seattle Academy." Once you enter it under "School Lookup," you'll be able to scroll down and choose Seattle Academy.
- Graduation date: June 2, 2020 (as of 5/1 Seattle Academy was still confirming this but fine to use)
- College advisor's prefix, first name, last name, title, email, phone (middle initial not required):

- Ms. Melanie Reed, Director of College Advising, mreed@seattleacademy.org, 206-676-6805
- Mr. Dave Thomas, Associate Director of College Advising, dthomas@seattleacademy.org, 206-676-6852
- Ms. Misa Kabashima, Associate Director of College Advising, mkabashima@seattleacademy.org, 206-720-2652
- Colleges & Universities: Please list summer programs in the activities section unless you already have ten other activities.
- Grades: Class rank (none); Graduating class size (127); Cumulative GPA (current unweighted GPA in your Naviance account after spring tri); GPA scale (4); GPA weighting (unweighted). This is how you should report GPA here though we do send both weighted/unweighted grades on transcripts.
- Current or Most Recent Year Courses: **Mistakes are frequently made here, so please read carefully.**
 - To make this easier, first write out on a separate piece of paper your most likely schedule for the year, not including study halls. See below as an example:

1st trimester

Honors English 12
History 12
Pre-Calculus
Honors Physics
French 4
Sustainability
Ceramics

2nd trimester

Honors English 12
History 12
Pre-Calculus
Honors Physics
French 4
TBD science elective
TBD arts elective

3rd trimester

Honors English 12
History 12
Pre-Calculus
Honors Physics
French 4
TBD science elective
TBD arts elective

- When asked “How many courses would you like to report?”, the above student would list **nine**: Honors English, History, Pre-Calculus, Honors Physics, French 4, Sustainability, TBD science elective, Ceramics, and TBD arts elective. It’s to your advantage (and easier for you and for the college) if you don’t get specific and provide the specific English and history course titles. Keeping it general allows you to list the general courses you’re going to take without having to know which English and history electives, for example.
- Please select the course scheduling system your school is using: Trimester
- Course 1 title: The student above would list “Honors English” / Honors / Full Year. Start by listing your core academic subjects.
- The following are honors classes at Seattle Academy for which the student should click the “Honors” designation: Honors English 12/11, Honors History 12/11, Honors Biology, Advanced Chemistry, Physics (either section), Calculus 1, Calculus 2, Honors Software Development (only if elected to take it as such), all 6th and 5th year foreign language, some 4th year foreign language.
- After listing all the year-long courses, the student would then list single trimester classes.
- You should fill in all classes for the year, even if you don’t know exactly what you’re taking in future trimesters (hence “TBD” or “To Be Determined”). Everyone will take their core classes through the spring and you don’t need to explain senior projects at this time.
- Mostly you want to demonstrate to your colleges accurately and honestly that you are invested in strong coursework, relative to you, throughout the year and into the spring. Should you wish to drop classes later in the year, you may only do so by working through various Seattle Academy channels (your college advisor, the registrar’s office, your advisor, the teacher, the deans of faculty, and the division head) *and* reporting the course change(s) to your colleges.
- Honors: The most common mistake in this section is that **it is not for reporting honors classes, but rather various awards and honors received during or since ninth grade**. We do report to colleges that Seattle Academy has a long-standing policy by which it confers few honors and awards. Colleges will know that when they read your application, so please do not worry if you don’t have information to include here. Things you can list:
 - Honor Roll, which you can calculate: 3.45 - 3.74 is Honor Roll; 3.75 and up is High Honor Roll
 - Selection to work on a special project or research
 - Selection for participation in a selective club or organization
 - National Merit, National Achievement, & National Hispanic Recognition (the details of which are announced in September)
 - Outside-of-school recognition
 - Outside-of-school scholarships
- Future Plans: Regarding majors, it can sometimes be disadvantageous to list majors like “pre-medicine,” “business,” or “engineering” throughout your application(s). Some students use undecided, which is an option, but one you should discuss in back to school meetings with your college advisor. It’s important to know that certain majors can “up” the selectivity of colleges that otherwise look attainable.

Section #4: Testing

- If your grades are far stronger than your testing would indicate *and* you are applying to any colleges “test optional” (see this link for school-by-school test optional requirements), do not list any scores here. Otherwise, you can list your scores.
- Include scores you want colleges to see. If you have multiple SAT and/or ACT test dates, enter your highest section score, even if earned on different test dates. If your colleges allow you to choose your scores, you could list only the ACT even if you also took the SAT.
- Sometimes colleges will accept self-reported scores from the Common Application, but usually colleges require that official scores come from the testing agencies (SAT and ACT). To see a list of colleges that accept self-reported scores, go to <https://www.compassprep.com/self-reporting-test-scores/>
- Should you require the exact dates of the tests, please see the list of specific testing dates below.

11th Grade (2018-2019)

ACT September 8, 2018

SAT or SAT Subject Tests October 6, 2018

ACT October 27, 2018

SAT or SAT Subject Tests November 3, 2018

SAT or SAT Subject Tests December 1, 2018

ACT December 8, 2018

ACT February 9, 2019

SAT March 10, 2019

ACT April 13, 2019

SAT or SAT Subject Tests May 4, 2019

SAT or SAT Subject Tests June 1, 2019

ACT June 8, 2019

12th Grade (2019-2020)

SAT or SAT Subject Tests August 24, 2019

ACT September 14, 2019

SAT or SAT Subject Tests October 5, 2019

ACT October 26, 2019

SAT or SAT Subject Tests November 2, 2019

SAT or SAT Subject Tests December 7, 2019




ACT December 14, 2019

Section #5: Activities

- You should try to list as many (grades 9-12) activities as allowed in this section, starting with those you deem most “high profile” OR indicative of your initiative, intellectual curiosity, unusual talent, philanthropy and/or leadership. Don’t sell yourself short.
- Use your *best estimate* for general numbers of hours or weeks, recognizing colleges know that not all activities continue all year, etc.
- Don’t forget Seattle Academy service work and/or trips.
- Provide explanations of activities not easily understood by those outside the Seattle or Seattle Academy communities.
- Most of all, it’s important to give a vivid, specific, fair picture – understandable to colleges that may not know the name or meaning of every club or activity – of how you show initiative, intellectual curiosity, unusual talent, philanthropy, and/or leadership.
- The activities you list here do not need to all be from Seattle Academy. If you do something in your community outside of school, colleges want to know about that as well. As long as your activity fits in to one of the following categories, go ahead and add it to your Application:

“Academic”	“Art”	“Athletics/Club”	“Athletics/JV-Varsity”
“Career Oriented”	“Community Service”	“Computer/Technology”	“Cultural”
“Dance”	“Debate/Speech”	“Environmental”	“Family Responsibilities”
“Foreign Exchange”	“Foreign Language”	“Journalism/Publication”	“Junior R.O.T.C.”
“LGBT”	“Music: Instrumental”	“Music: Vocal”	“Religious”
“Research”	“Robotics”	“School Spirit”	“Science/Math”
“Student Govt/Politics”	“Theater/Drama”	“Work (Paid)”	“Other Club/Activity”

- Common Application limits the number of activities you can enter to ten and imposes a **150 character count** in describing each. You’ll need to find a way to be concise but still articulate what you do as completely as possible in order for the Admission Officer reader to understand what your contribution to that activity means. Be specific, provide examples, and don’t expect the reader to understand
SAASisms Look at these three hypothetical entries of the same activity as an example of what to do and what not to do:

Athletics: JV/Varsity 9, 10, 11, 12 15 hr/wk, 52 wk/yr	Soccer, NA SAVGS	
Athletics: JV/Varsity 9, 10, 11, 12 15 hr/wk, 52 wk/yr	Soccer, Sweeper Play and practice with varsity team, train during off-season.	
Athletics: JV/Varsity 9, 10, 11, 12 15 hr/wk, 52 wk/yr	Soccer, Sweeper on Seattle Academy Varsity Soccer Team Practice or train year-round; played during every game of the 2017 season with a near-perfect record. Work on soccer skills in my free time.	

- While you might feel like 150 characters won't be enough, you'll be surprised. Most activities can be explained in a succinct enough manner to fit. If all else fails, you can elaborate more fully in the "Additional Information" section of your application. Don't worry too much about hours/week or weeks/year if you're involved in the activity different times during different parts of the year... this is a rough approximation. Make sure you proof this section just as much as you would an essay. When you finish trying to recall all your activities on your own, show your list to a coach, friends, or family members to help fill in some of the gaps. Parents in particular will remember things you have done that you've long since forgotten!

Section #6: Writing

- Once you enter specific colleges to which you're going to apply, you'll see their essay expectations here. You have the option of sending an essay even when not required, and in most cases we recommend you do so.
- Most students have an essay they wish to revise that satisfies the first prompt about a story central to who they are.
- Your college advisor is happy to offer feedback on a draft of this and other college-related writing, always with a one-week turnaround once school starts. It is best for revision to send your college advisor that document outside the Common App (in Word, etc.).
- Disciplinary History: It is best to answer these questions truthfully, talking to your college advisor about how to characterize the events such that they reflect your self-awareness, openness to change, and growth. A mature description of a disciplinary event that highlights personal development can read favorably to colleges.
- Additional Information: Note that the Common App is truly that: a *common* way to apply to more than one school. Thus, anything you write in this section is visible to all of the Common Application schools to which you'll apply. The various college-specific sections are where you will customize your answers for each institution. This general "Additional Information" section is a great place to explain a blip in your grades, anything else that might raise a flag for an admission committee (and that you're comfortable sharing with all of your schools), or something you didn't feel you got to explain as fully as you'd like elsewhere in the application. This is also the place to expand on your activities list if you truly don't think you have enough space in that section of the application.

My Colleges

- Click My Colleges, which leads to additional writing for many schools. In consultation with your college advisor, you will hopefully have a diverse and balanced college list entered accurately on your required Application Planning Checklist (again, for review with your college advisor), in your Naviance account, and in your Common App.
- Under My Colleges, you should expand and look early at the questions/expectations for each school you've entered.
- You'll be able to see if the college has additional short questions (see above for notes on indicating major choice, or not) or a writing supplement, all of which should be handled with the same proofreading, vividness, and care as the main part of the Common App.
Sometimes you need to answer some of the questions in the other sections before additional writing prompts appear, so don't put those questions off until the last moment.
- If you have questions about whether or not you should apply for need-based financial aid, speak with your college advisor.
- You don't need to answer un-starred/optional items, but please answer all optional essays (which we and colleges don't consider optional).
- **Recommenders and FERPA: This important section needs to be handled carefully. Once you have completed the "current school" details under the Common App/Education tab, you'll be able to see information here.**
 - PLEASE FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS.
 - FERPA release authorization under one of your schools in the COLLEGES tab
 - Click "release authorization"
 - Read the items, paying particular attention to #2
 - Click the box at the bottom
 - Click the "I authorize every school..." box on the next page
 - Click "I waive my right to review my recommendations and supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf." (This is the first of the two selections listed here. Waiving this right strengthens your application(s).)
 - Click "I understand..."
 - "Sign" the authorization by typing your name in the box.
- **Do not add additional recommenders or assign your College Advisor (Counselor) or Teachers forms. We send support documents through Naviance, not Common App, and adding recommenders in Common App can interfere with that interface.**

Art and or Music/Supplements

- Not all colleges want these, and some actively discourage them.
- Only submit a visual or performing art supplement if your work in one or both of those areas is exceptional relative to your applicant pools and/or the admission office and/or the arts department(s) require proof of your talent (for possible major or scholarship).
- Start preparing your visual or performing arts materials in the summer. Completing these items always takes longer and has more details than you think.
- Follow any directions carefully for this section (if available). Colleges often have very precise requirements for how to submit your work.
- Some, but not all, colleges will require the use of SlideRoom for visual arts submissions.
- If you think you might have work exceptional enough to merit a visual or performing arts supplement, and your college(s) will accept this, talk to your college advisor during your initial fall meeting about whether a visual or performing arts teacher needs to write a recommendation to accompany the supplement.

Other Helpful Notes

- You can "preview" how your Common App looks at any point during its completion.
- While you can revise your main Common App essay as many times as you wish between submissions, this is something that "encourages unnecessary work," according to Washington Post writer, Valerie Strauss (we agree!). She writes: "Colleges and universities that want tailored essays will almost certainly request them via a supplemental essay, leaving the main essay available to delve into something

authentic, personal, and worth sharing to any school to which you apply. Now if for some reason you're applying to schools with very different identities – for example, conservative Liberty University and liberal Oberlin College – then perhaps it would make sense to differentiate the essays, but the college list that includes such dramatically different kinds of schools is exceedingly rare. **Generally speaking, a student need write only one essay for the Common App essay.**

Signature and Submission

- Check to make sure you have not missed any required sections. You will not be able to advance to the submission section if you are missing any required questions.
- You take deliberate steps to submit, so do not worry about submitting accidentally.
- Keep a copy of every application you submit, saving a PDF of your final or printing out a copy of your final.
- Submission happens in three parts.
 - You “print preview” and confirm that everything on your application is correct.
 - You pay the application fee with a credit card (and it has to go through).
 - Some schools don't have application fees, in which case you'll move on to the next section.
 - You type your “signature” and hit the final submit button, ideally a couple of days before a school's deadline in case the Common Application experiences slowdowns.
- Check to make sure that all of the sections of your Common Application submitted (the main part as well as any supplements and the payment). You should see green checks on the Dashboard for all of the required parts.
- Once you submit the application, you should get an email from the college confirming the receipt of the application. Sometimes, this email can include information about sending additional materials, self-reporting your transcript, or logging-in to a portal to see if they have received your transcripts, recommendations letters, and test scores. **It is important to keep track of these portals and your log-in information because these are oftentimes the sites at which you'll receive your decision.**