



College Planning Guide

2021-2022

Anne Perez, M.S. LPC

Director of Guidance

aperez@vjmhs.org

215-357-8810 x118

Kim Bedrosian, M.Ed.

College Counselor

kbedrosian@vjmhs.org

215-357-8810 x123

Terry Smeraglio

Guidance Assistant

tsmeraglio@vjmhs.org

215-357-8810 x121



Welcome Parents/Guardians! We are at the start of an exciting time in your daughter's academic career. Within this booklet is all the information you'll need to begin the college search, learn about the college process and explore your daughter's post-secondary school options. There is much to consider and campuses to explore but with the knowledge that you will gain, you will search confidently for your daughter's 'next step'.

The Guidance Department is ALWAYS here for any questions that you or your daughter may have! We look forward to working closely with your daughter, assisting her and you along the way!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Anne Perez'.

Anne Perez
Director of Guidance

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Kim Bedrosian'.

Kim Bedrosian
College Counselor

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Terry Smeraglio'.

Terry Smeraglio
Guidance Assistant

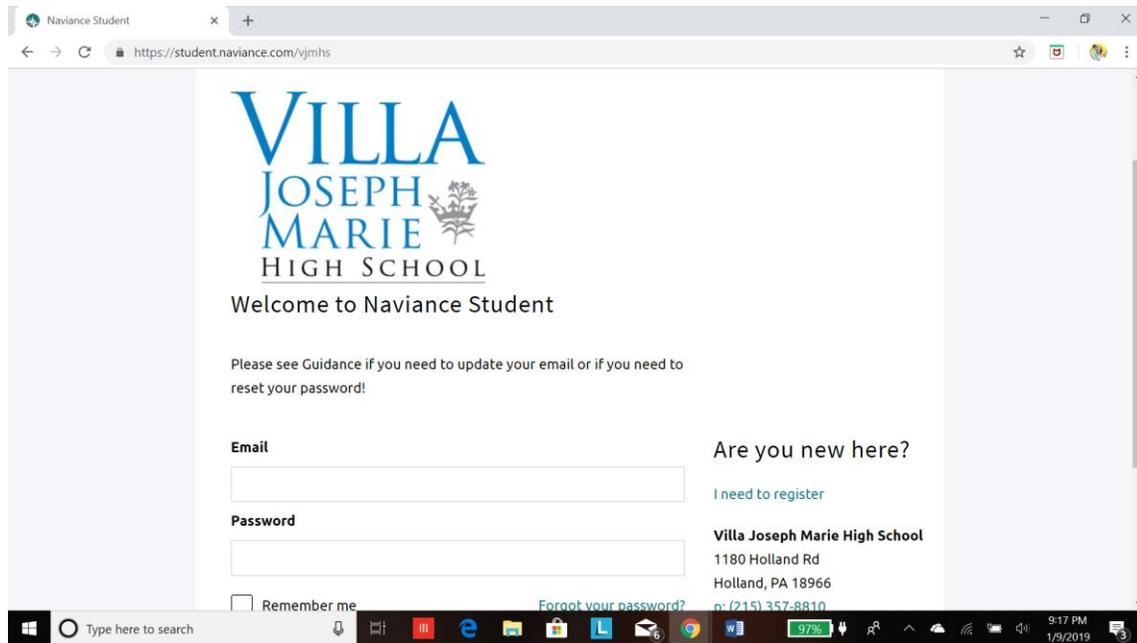


We are pleased to offer *Naviance Student* and eDocs from Naviance, a Web-based service designed especially for students and parents. *Naviance Student* is a comprehensive website that you and your daughter can use to help in making decisions about courses, colleges, and careers. *Naviance Student* is linked with Counselor's Office, a service that we use in our office to track and analyze data about college and career plans, which provides up-to-date information that's specific to Villa Joseph Marie High School. **It is necessary that we have an email address for each person (mom, dad, daughter(s)) so you can all receive up-to-date information.**

- Visit our school's Naviance Student site:

<https://student.naviance.com/vjmhs/>

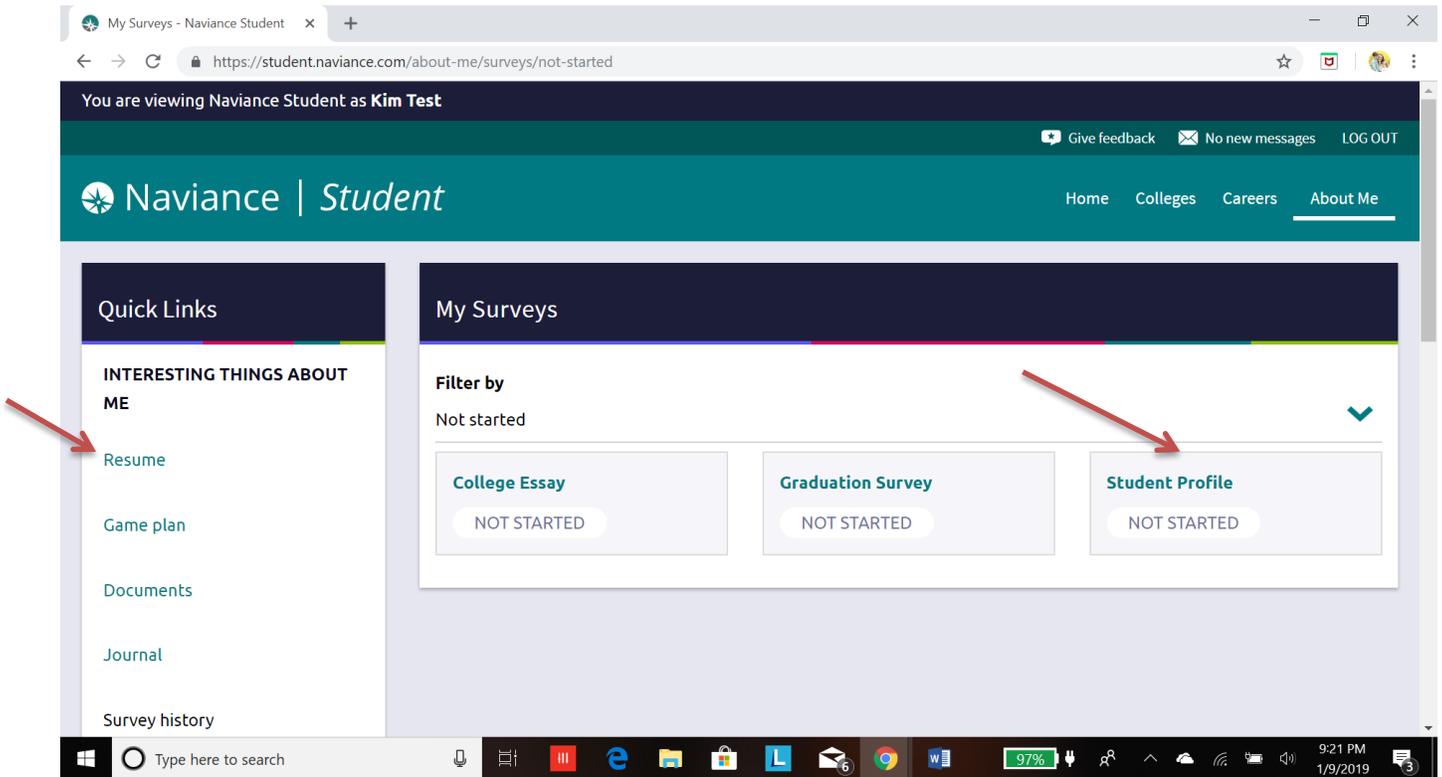
- If you have an account, login with your email and password.



- For those of you visiting the site for the first time, please enter your personal registration code in the New User box and follow the on-screen instructions to create your own account.
- If you need your account reset, please contact the Guidance Department.

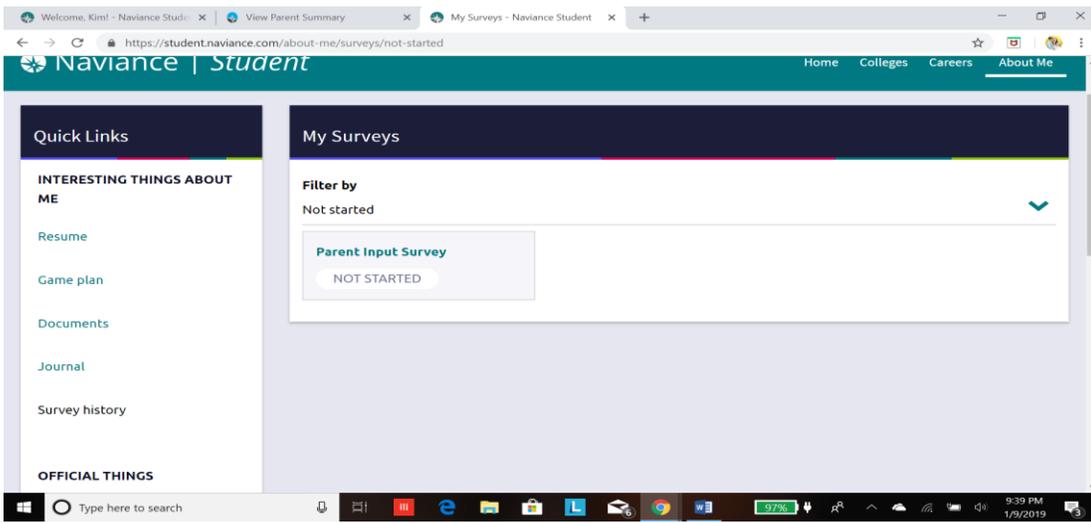
Exploring Your Naviance Account

“About Me”

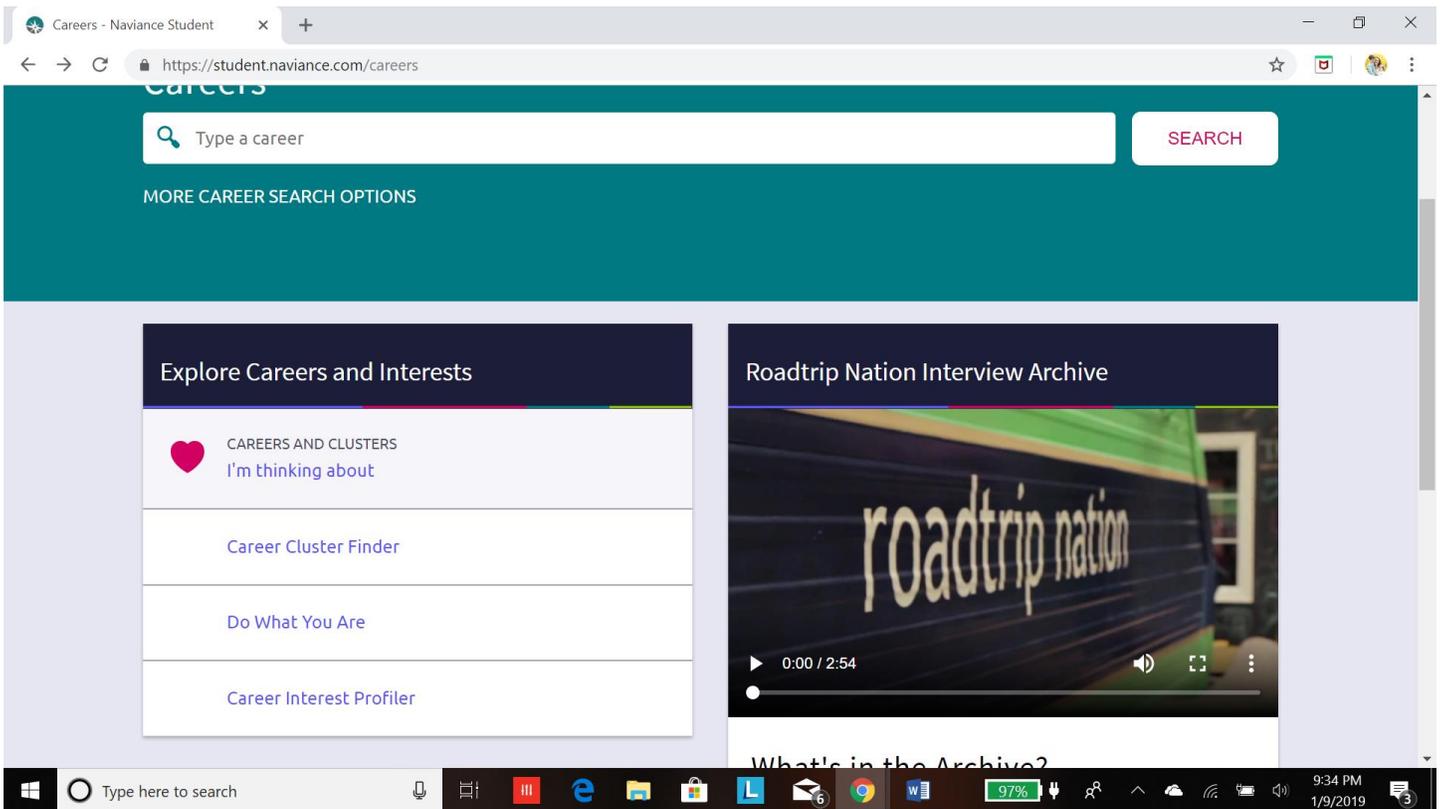


Students will complete the ***Student Profile***, under the ‘About Me’ tab and then to ‘My Surveys’. This completed form will enable your counselor to write a letter of recommendation. **This is mandatory and due May 1, 2021. A letter cannot be written if this is not completed.**

On the parent's version of *Naviance Student* there is a **Parent Input Survey**. Parents please complete; it is useful in writing our letter of recommendation.



Under **“Careers”** you will see surveys that, when completed, will match you to various careers.



“Colleges”

The screenshot shows the Naviance Student interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Colleges', 'Careers', and 'About Me'. Below this is a 'Quick Links' sidebar with options like 'MORE SEARCH OPTIONS', 'SuperMatch@', 'MY COLLEGES', 'Colleges match', and 'Colleges Visits'. The main content area is titled 'Colleges I'm thinking about' and features a search bar and a 'Compare Me' button. A table lists colleges with columns for College, Delivery type, Added By, Expected Difficulty*, Application Deadlines, and Interest. The table shows one entry for 'Holy Family University' with a delivery type of 'Computer' and 'Student' as the added by.

College	Delivery type	Added By	Expected Difficulty*	Application Deadlines	Interest
Holy Family University	Computer	Student	N/A	N/A	N/A

Use the *'colleges I'm thinking about'* link to keep track of your running list of colleges/universities. This list will be used during your individual college planning meetings. As you apply during senior year, you will move the schools into the *'colleges I'm applying to'* page.

College match, **college search**, and **SuperMatch** are all great resources to begin your research. Take a look at the *'scattergrams'* and use the *'college compare'* option to see how your academic performance compares with previous Villa students who applied to the college.

College Admission Counselors will schedule information sessions in the fall. You can sign up for these visits by clicking on *'view all upcoming college visits'* on the homepage. Villa hosted approximately 100 schools in fall 2020. Do not miss this opportunity to meet with the representative who will most likely be reading your application.

The **scholarship list** provides opportunities to explore scholarship options and notify Guidance if applicable. Scholarships are updated frequently, as they come to the attention of the Guidance Office, and an email notification is sent to students, as the list is updated. Scholarship opportunities are also posted in "This Week at Villa."

Application Deadlines

Regular Decision

Regular decision students must meet the stated deadline. Decisions are made and applicants are notified by a specific date, usually in March or early April. Most colleges give students until May 1st (the common reply date) to accept or reject their offer.

Rolling Admissions

Rolling applications are reviewed as soon as the file is complete. Decisions are rendered on a continual basis and students are notified as soon as possible.

Early Action

Early Action (EA) allows applicants to submit their completed application during the early part of their senior year (typically Oct. 15, Nov. 1, Nov. 15 or Dec. 1), with admissions decisions arriving before winter break. Some colleges limit applicants to a single EA application – this is called *single choice early action*. Some colleges now have two early action deadlines. Accepted EA students may continue to apply to other colleges under the regular decision plans since EA is NON-BINDING!

Early Decision

Early decision plans (ED) are **BINDING**. Students may apply to **ONLY ONE COLLEGE** 'ED' and must agree to attend that institution if accepted. Some colleges (as per past history) tend to accept a large portion of their freshman class from the Early Decision applicant pool, so there can be an advantage in applying ED. Early Decision applicants may find their applications accepted, denied, or deferred to the regular decision pool. **Accepted Early Decision students MUST withdraw all other college applications from consideration when they receive their ED acceptance.** While ED may provide an "edge" in the admission process, it is appropriate ONLY for students who are SURE of their first choice school and have visited and thoroughly researched the school's programs. Early decision pools tend to be extremely competitive, so applicants must be strong candidates. Students who NEED to compare financial aid offers from several colleges should probably not lock themselves into Early Decision!

An Early Decision intent needs to be discussed thoroughly with parents/guardians and your counselor.



Senior Year Highlighted



- ✓ College Essay
- ✓ Common Application
- ✓ Visit campuses and re-visit!
- ✓ Update your college list in Naviance before the individual college planning meetings with your counselor
- ✓ Register for the August SAT or fall SAT/ACT exams
- ✓ Complete applications, be mindful of all deadlines, and stay organized!
- ✓ It is your responsibility to send all SAT scores and ACT scores to your colleges via their websites which can be found on Naviance
- ✓ Complete NCAA registration, if applicable
- ✓ Be aware of schools that require CSS Profile Financial Aid Forms
<https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>
- ✓ Complete the FAFSA - <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>
- ✓ Have your parents/guardians attend Financial Aid Night at Villa
- ✓ Majority of applications should be complete by Thanksgiving
- ✓ Schedule interviews even if they are optional
- ✓ Keep your grades up!
- ✓ Complete a blue transcript request form for every college/university to which you apply.
- ✓ Research scholarships
- ✓ The Guidance Department will automatically send mid-year transcripts to all schools to which you have applied
- ✓ Check your email! We love sending Guidance reminders!
- ✓ **Hand in copies of your acceptance and scholarship letters to Guidance**
- ✓ Review financial aid packages and merit scholarships. Negotiations are sometimes possible - talk to the Financial Aid offices. It doesn't hurt to ask!
- ✓ Although this is a busy year, it is also very exciting! Take time to enjoy what you have accomplished!

Applying to College

Take the time to research and you'll be able to streamline your initial list down to a manageable number of schools. Once you know what you're looking for, you can start crafting a list of colleges that fit your specifications. Don't include a school on your list that you won't be willing to attend. As your list takes shape, include schools that fall into each of the following three categories: dream, good fit, and higher likely.

- 2 – 3 dream schools
- 2 – 3 good fit schools
- 2 – 3 higher likely schools

A ***dream school*** is one where your academic credentials fall below the school's range for the average freshman. They are more challenging to be accepted into, but they should still be possible.

A ***good fit school*** is one where your academic credentials fall well within (or even exceed) the school's range for the average freshman. There are no guarantees, but it's not unreasonable to be accepted to several of your match schools.

A ***higher likely school*** is one where your academic credentials fall above the school's range for the average freshman. You can be more confident in being considered for acceptance. There is no safety in admissions, but there are schools for everyone.

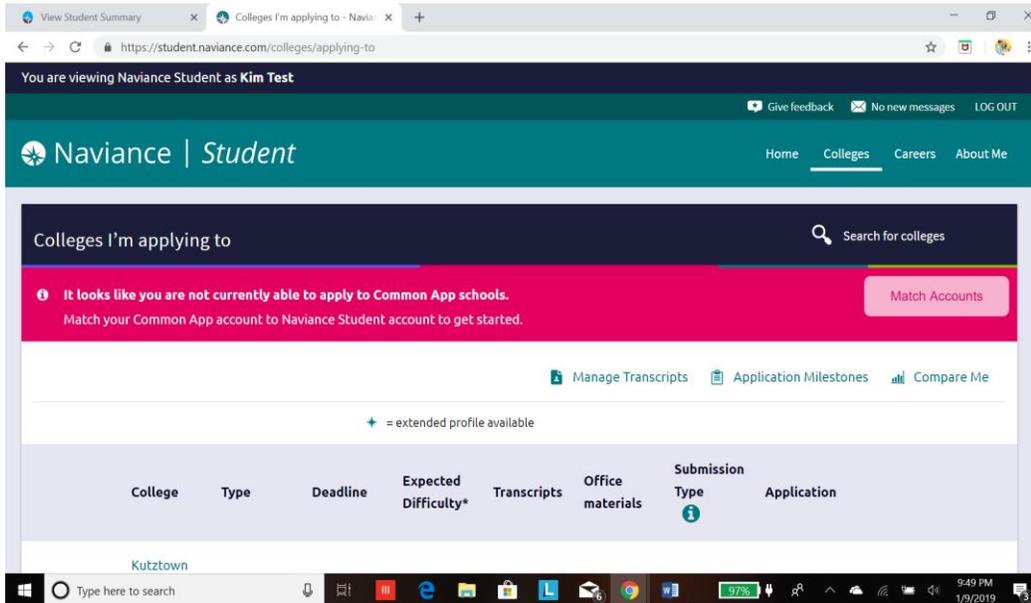


The Key Components of the College Application Process

- If the school to which you are applying is a Common Application member, you are encouraged to use the Common Application to apply, in order for your Guidance documents to be sent electronically via Naviance eDocs.
- If the school is not a member you will apply using the college's online application or the Coalition application.



www.commonapp.org



- **You must sign the FERPA Waiver & Authorization on CA. Then enter your email and match your Common Application Account in Naviance, under 'colleges I'm applying to'. Your supporting documents cannot be sent until the match is complete. Input your email and click on 'match'.**
- Send official SAT/ACT scores to each college/university from the testing site, as required. **This is the student's responsibility.**
- Complete every application thoroughly. Use spell check; double check all entries. Answer every question completely.
- Include your college essay.
- Send supplemental materials (portfolios, essays, videos), if required.
- There are a growing number of colleges and universities that do not require submission of SAT or ACT scores. Fair Test (www.fairtest.org) includes a list of schools on its website. A school that does not require standardized test scores usually has alternative requirements. If you are applying "test optional" or "test flexible", check to see if that school requires an additional essay, graded paper, or letter of recommendation. Check each college for current policy.
- Your file is not complete until every component of your application is finished prior to the designated deadline!!!

Application Fast Facts

School Code: 392990

GPA: 4.0 weighted scale

Number of students in your graduating class: 102

Requesting Letters of Recommendation and Transcripts

Letters of Recommendation

During the second semester of your junior year, you will request a letter of recommendation from two teachers.

Letters of recommendation requests is a two-step process:

1. **Add your teacher requests in Naviance under ‘Colleges’, then ‘Apply to College’**
2. **A pink ‘teacher recommendation request’ form must be given directly to the teacher by the student with completed answers to the questions listed on the pink form.**

This is due March 1, 2021. It is mandatory that you ask two teachers for a letter of recommendation.

If applicable, request a letter from a teacher that teaches you in a subject that will be relevant to your college major. We encourage you to ask for a recommendation from teachers of core academic subjects.

Request a Transcript

To request a transcript to be sent to a college, a student must send request through Naviance in the “colleges I’m applying to” tab and then obtain the proper “Authorization to Send Transcript” form ([Blue Sheet](#)) from the Guidance Office and fill it out completely. You will indicate each school or scholarship to which you apply to on this form. This specific form, which you are required to sign, gives our school permission to mail or send electronically a copy of your cumulative record (grades) to a specific post-secondary institution- college, university, business school, technical school, scholarship committee, agency, etc.

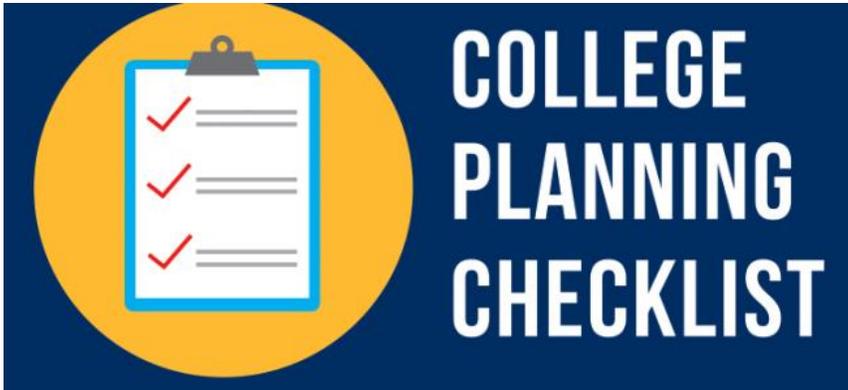
Student athletes must register with NCAA at www.eligibilitycenter.org Please see Guidance for more information.

➤ **MEETING ALL APPLICATION DEADLINES IS THE STUDENT’S RESPONSIBILITY**

Please be aware that **10 WORKING DAYS** are required to process each application.

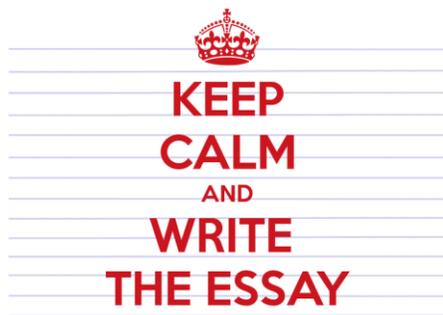
- **October 15, 2021** deadline to submit all blue transcript request forms for **November 1st applications**
- **November 1, 2021** deadline to submit all blue transcript request forms for **November 15th applications**
- **November 13, 2021** deadline to submit applications **before Thanksgiving break**
- **December 15, 2021** deadline to submit applications **before Christmas break**

College Visits:



- Take an official campus tour.
- Take a virtual tour ahead of your visit.
- Have an interview with admission officer, if possible.
- Participate in group information session at the admission office.
- Sit in on a class (or two!)
- Talk to a professor in your chosen major(s).
- Talk to a coach in your chosen sport.
- Talk to a counselor in the career center.
- Spend the night in the dorm with a current student.
- Bring your transcript and copy of test scores.
- As a family, complete the Net Price calculator, located on each college's financial aid site.

The Essay/Personal Statement



In actuality, students have very little control over many components of their applications – the transcript, the standardized tests; the letters of recommendation are, by the beginning of senior year, a “done deal.” The one area in which a student can have a true and positive impact is the essay. Unfortunately, many students fail to put the time and effort into this component. A good/effective/decision-impacting essay takes brainstorming, editing and re-editing. **THE COLLEGE ESSAY SHOULD BE THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF WRITING CRAFTED DURING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CAREER.**

A well done, original essay can “speak” for the applicant in a most forthright and engaging manner and can be the “yes” factor. The purpose of the application essay is to allow the admissions committee to really “view” the student – to see the student’s passions, struggles and personality – the unique “third dimension” which sets each person apart as an individual.

Typical themes address intellectual interests and achievements, passions or talents, or what is meaningful and significant to the applicant. Some points to consider:

- Clearly answer the questions posed – “discuss” means to examine, analyze, and present both sides of the issue. “Describe” means to characterize and elaborate. “Explain” equals the how or why, i.e., the clarification or interpretation.
- When given a choice of essay topics, avoid the one that is easiest to answer and instead select the topic that allows one the opportunity to answer or voice the question that may arise from the review of the application. Topics to address in a straight forward manner on an essay include why a grade fell to a B- or C, how a passion for history was developed or why there is lack of participation in school clubs.
- Follow the art of writing process. Brainstorm topics; type a rough draft. Obtain feedback from people who one respects. On the first draft, request the reader to comment upon the ideas, the flow, and the level of persuasiveness, rather than grammar. Revise essay patterns following patterns in feedback; aim for clarity and meaning. Repeat the process, correct grammar, tighten up organization – watch sentence structure and prevalence of “I” statements. Proofread carefully and ask others to do the same.

A sparkling essay will not excuse mediocre grades and an undistinguished record but effectively employing the essay opportunity can (and does) make the difference between an accepted or rejected decision by the college of choice.

College Admissions Tests Dates and Registration Deadlines

SAT <i>www.collegeboard.org</i>	
Test Date	Registration Deadline
March 13, 2021	February 12, 2021
May 8, 2021	April 8, 2021
June 5, 2021	May 26, 2021

ACT <i>www.actstudent.org</i>	
Test Date	Registration Deadline
April 17, 2021	March 12, 2021
June 12, 2021	May 7, 2021
July 17, 2021	June 18, 2021



Many students and parents begin the college prep process by comparing the ACT and SAT. Two of the most common questions they ask are:

- Is the ACT easier than the SAT?
- Do colleges prefer scores from the SAT or ACT?

The SAT and ACT generally test the same types of content. Both ACT and SAT scores are used for college admissions and merit-based scholarships. The biggest differences between the tests are that the ACT has a Science Test, and there's one SAT Math Section for which you cannot use a calculator. Most colleges don't prefer one test over the other.

	SAT	ACT
Why Take It	Colleges use SAT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.	Colleges use ACT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.
Test Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing & Language • Math 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Math • Reading • Science Reasoning • Essay (Optional)
Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 hours (without essay) • 3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay) • 3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay)
Reading	5 reading passages	4 reading passages
Science	None	1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge)
Math	Covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arithmetic • Algebra I & II • Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis 	Covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arithmetic • Algebra I & II • Geometry and Trigonometry
Calculator Policy	Some math questions don't allow you to use a calculator.	You can use a calculator on all math questions.
How It's Scored	Scored on a scale of 400–1600	Scored on a scale of 1–36

SRAR

Self-Reported Academic Record

- One of the new trends in admissions is that students have to self-report their courses, grades, and sometimes test scores that they have received over the entirety of their high school careers. Colleges that are currently requiring the SRAR are Penn State, Temple, and University of Pittsburgh.
- Students need to check the college's website and application list to ensure they complete all application requirements.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://admissions.psu.edu/apply/srar/>. The page header includes the Penn State logo and "Undergraduate Admissions" text. Navigation buttons for "Visit", "Apply", and "Log in to MyPennState" are visible. A search bar is also present. The main navigation menu includes "Home", "How to Apply", "Academics", "Campuses", "Student Life", "Costs and Aid", and "Info For". The breadcrumb trail reads "Home / How to Apply / Self-Reported Academic Record (SRAR)". The main heading is "Self-Reported Academic Record (SRAR)" with a sub-heading "Information about Penn State's use of a Self-Reported Academic Record as part of the application." A sidebar on the right contains links for "Admission Requirements", "Steps to Apply", "Application Review Process", and "Dates and Deadlines". The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 10:10 PM on 1/9/2019 and a battery level of 97%.

Sample: Teacher Recommendation Request Form

TEACHER RECOMMENDATION REQUEST FORM

STUDENTS – PLEASE RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO THE TEACHER BY MARCH 1ST

TEACHERS – PLEASE UPLOAD YOUR LETTER INTO NAVIANCE

Please print:

STUDENT NAME:

TEACHER NAME:

COURSE TITLE:

STUDENTS:

Please answer the following questions thoroughly and thoughtfully (you may do so as a word document, but please be sure to include this form when you give it to your teacher).

The more information you provide to your teacher the better!

1. What challenged you most in this course?
2. What are you most proud of in terms of your performance in this course?
3. What was most interesting to you in the course?
4. What are the skills you believe you learned in the course? Provide an example of when you demonstrated or used them.
5. Reflecting on your experience in this course, what is the single most prominent moment you will remember?
6. If enrolling in the course was optional, please explain why you chose to do so. Did the course meet your expectation?
7. Why did you pick this course and this teacher to write your letter of recommendation on your behalf?
8. What two adjectives would you pick to describe yourself and why?
9. Describe an assignment you liked the best in this course - what topic did you write about/present about/learn about? Why did you like it?

Sample: **Authorization to Send Transcript Form**

**Villa Joseph Marie High School
Authorization to Send Transcript Form 2021-2022
VJM School Code: 392990**

Please return this form to Mrs. Bedrosian 10 working days prior to your earliest deadline.

Student Name _____

Intended Major _____

School(s) to which you are applying to:

Name of School	Deadline	Decision Type (ED, EA, Rolling, RD)	Teacher letters to send: (prioritize)
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Please check off that the following items have been completed before submitting this request form:

- Updated "Colleges I'm applying to" list in Naviance to match the above list.
- Student Profile completed in Naviance for counselor letter.
- FERPA signed & Naviance/Common Application accounts matched.

Please read the following statement & sign below:

"I request that Villa Joseph Marie High School provide educational records, including grades, courses, and any other information required by the above named school. I understand that this information is to be used by the college Admissions office in evaluation of my application & that this information shall be confidential. The school counseling office is NOT responsible for sending test scores and submission of student applications. The counseling office will submit Q1 grades, as requested by the college and Midyear/Final transcripts to schools once grades are posted and available."

Student Signature

Date

FOR GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT USE:

Date form submitted by student: _____

Date documents submitted to college: _____

Junior Year College Planning Checklist:

Junior
Year

First Semester:

- Do well in your classes and maintain good grades.**
- Take the **PSAT**.
- Attend college tours & rep visits to Villa (in person & virtual).
- Practice using your Naviance account and start exploring schools.
- Add schools to your “thinking about” list.**
- Organize a **testing plan** based on the new guidelines set out by each college admissions office. Test prep is a family decision, but there are many free ways to practice for all types of tests.

Second Semester:

- Do well in your classes and maintain good grades.**
- Try the SAT and ACT, and prepare for AP exams (if applicable).
- Attend College Planning Night (3/2/21) with your parents/family members.**
- Course selection**-examine the requirements by each college & for specific majors (do your research and ask questions)
- Build a resume (Naviance, Word, etc., do have sample formats)
- Think of 2-3 teachers who you would like to request college letters of recommendation from and submit a pink form. We will do the requests together and pink sheets are due to teachers by March 1st.**
- Create an account at www.commonapp.org .
- Complete your Student Profile in Naviance by May 1st.**
- Register for APPportunity Camp with Mrs. Bedrosian (August prior to Senior year)**

Into the summer:

- Explore pre-college options and summer opportunities in your intended major and/or career fields.
- Visit college campuses/attend virtual tours.
- Check your email regularly.
- Clean up your college list in Naviance.
- Touch base with Mrs. Bedrosian.
- Register with the NCAA eligibility center, if you are going to be a recruited athlete.
- Start your applications after August 1st. Create a list of deadlines.**

Senior Application Checklist:

- Naviance Application List is current
- Naviance and Common Application matched
- Application Submitted
- Supplements Submitted (if required)
- Sent test scores (if sending)
- SRAR submitted (if required)
- Application fee paid (if applicable)
- Interview (optional? required?) (if applicable)
- Submitted Blue Sheet (Transcript Release) to Mrs. Bedrosian (Gives permission to send counselor letter, teacher letters, transcript, etc.)
- FAFSA and/or CSS Profile submitted (starting October 1st www.fafsa.gov)
- Once applied, check email for links to portals to check status of applications for each college.
- Provide Mrs. Bedrosian with acceptance and scholarship letters.**

