



College Planning Guide

Anne Perez, M.S. LPC

Director of Counseling

aperez@vjmhs.org

215-357-8810 x118

Linda Smith, M.S.

School Counselor

lsmith@vjmhs.org

215-357-8810 x148

Paige McCloskey, M.S.

School Counselor

pmccloskey@vjmhs.org

215-357-8810 x 109

Terry Smeraglio

Counseling 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 Counseling 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!





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 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. **Students receive their Naviance account during their Freshman year.**

➤ **Visit our school's Naviance Student site:**

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

- If you need your account reset, please contact the Counseling Department.
- Parents may also have access to their daughter's account. Please submit a request via email to VJMCounseling@vjmhs.org. A link will be forwarded to you to set up your account.

Applying to College

The Key Components of the College Application Process

- If the school to which you are applying is a Common Application member (www.commonapp.org) you are encouraged to use the Common Application to apply in order for your documents to be sent electronically via Naviance eDocs. Application is available August 1.
 - *If the school is not a member you will apply using the college's online application.*
- **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 College Board/ACT site, as required. ***This is the student's responsibility.***
- There are a number of colleges and universities that still do not require submission of SAT or ACT scores. A school that does not require standardized test scores may have 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.
- Some schools require students to self-report their courses, grades, test scores. This is referred to as **SRAR – Self Reported Academic Record**. Check if the schools you are applying to require you to do so. Once the application is submitted you will receive a link from the college to complete SRAR. This may be through an email or added to your application portal. All deadlines must be adhered to for application and SRAR.
- Include your college essay.
- Send supplemental materials (portfolios, essays, videos), if required.
- Complete every application thoroughly. Use spell check; double check all entries. Answer every question completely.
- Your file is not complete until **every component** of your application is submitted prior to the designated deadline.

Application Fast Facts

School Code: 392990

GPA: 4.0 weighted scale

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 mid-December. Students may continue to apply to other colleges under the regular decision plans since EA is NON-BINDING!

Restrictive Early Action

Some colleges limit applicants to a ***single EA application*** – this is called *single choice early action or restrictive early action*. Some colleges now have two early action deadlines. Students can not apply to other school EA or ED until they hear back from the REA school. Accepted EA students may continue to apply to other colleges under the regular decision plans since EA is NON-BINDING!

Early Decision/Early Decision 2

Early decision plans (ED) (ED2) are **BINDING**. Students may apply to **ONLY ONE COLLEGE** and **must agree to attend that institution if accepted**. Application deadlines for Early Decision are usually between Nov. 1 – Nov. 15. Application Deadlines for Early Decision 2 are usually between January 1 and February 1. Some colleges 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 not lock themselves into Early Decision! An Early Decision intent needs to be discussed thoroughly with parents/guardians and your counselor.

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.

1. **Consult with your teacher** and ask them if they would write a letter of recommendation, **before** you add them in Naviance.
2. If the teacher agrees to write you letter, **add your teacher requests in Naviance** under 'Colleges', then 'Letters of Recommendation.'
3. **Submit the 'teacher recommendation request' form** (page 6) directly to the teacher with all questions completed.
4. Be sure to thank the teachers writing your letters, either by a personal note or email.

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. **Authorization to Send Transcript Form** (page 7) needs to be **complete** and **submitted to the Counseling Department**. 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.

This form must be submitted at least 14 days before your earliest application deadline.

Student athletes must register with NCAA at www.eligibilitycenter.org

MEETING ALL APPLICATION DEADLINES IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

Date Requested: _____

**Villa Joseph Marie High School
TEACHER RECOMMENDATION REQUEST FORM**

STUDENT NAME: _____

TEACHER/ADVISOR NAME: _____

COURSE TITLE (s): _____

INTENDED MAJOR: _____

Directions to Students:

- **Ask at least one teacher in-person. Depending on the college you are applying to, you may be required to ask another teacher.**
- **Send a Naviance request to each teacher.**
- **Complete this form & email or hand in to the teacher.**
- **Do not forget to thank each teacher.**

**Answer the following questions as thoroughly and thoughtfully on a typed document.
The more information you provide the better!**

1. What challenged you most in this course?
2. What was most interesting to you in the course?
3. What are the skills you believe you learned in the course? Provide an example of when you demonstrated or used them.
4. Reflecting on your experience in this course, what is the single most prominent achievement that you will remember and are most proud of?
5. **For non-classroom recommenders**, why did you select this particular staff member?
What did you gain from this experience?

FERPA: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows students and their families (if the child is under 18) to review the student's records. This would include reading their recommendations. Most students, however, will choose to waive their rights to read recommendation letters.

**Villa Joseph Marie High School
AUTHORIZATION TO SEND TRANSCRIPT FORM
VJM School Code: 392990**

This form must be submitted at least 14 days before your earliest application deadline.

Please read the following statement & sign below:

"I give Villa Joseph Marie High School permission to release academic records to colleges, scholarship programs, etc. where my daughter, _____ is applying to." I understand this information is to be used by the College Admissions Office in evaluation of college applications, scholarship opportunities, athletic recruitment, etc. The VJMHS Counseling Office will submit transcripts and supporting documents. Students are responsible for submitting ALL applications and ALL standardized test scores if required.

This authorization is necessary for students to be able to request transcripts on Naviance to complete their college applications.

Parent Signature

Date

Student Signature

Class Year

FOR COUNSELING DEPARTMENT USE:

Date form submitted by student: _____



The Essay/Personal Statement

An area in which a student can have a true and positive impact is the essay. It is important 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.**

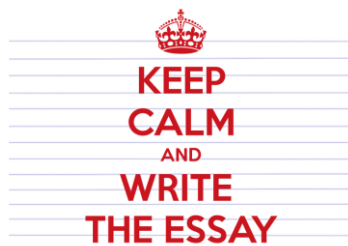
A well done, original essay can speak for the applicant in a most forthright and engaging manner and can be the yes factor. The purpose of the application essay is to allow the admissions committee to really view the student – to see the student’s passions, struggles and personality – the unique third 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:

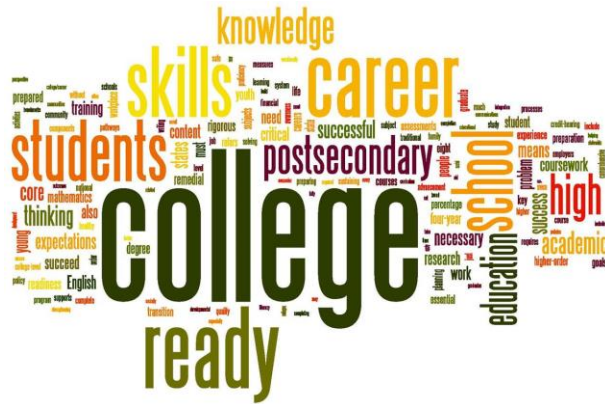
- Clearly answer the questions posed – discuss means to examine, analyze, and present both sides of the issue. Describe means to characterize and elaborate. Explain equals the how or why, i.e., the clarification or interpretation.
- When given a choice of essay topics, avoid the one that is easiest to 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.

During their junior year students will submit an essay and receive feedback from the English Department by the end of the school year. **SWORD (Student Workshop for Organization Revision and Drafting)** will provide additional resources and support throughout the year in conjunction with the English Department.



College Interviews/Questions: Most Frequently Asked



- How is your senior year going?
- What goals have you set for yourself and how do you plan to achieve them?
- Why have you chosen this school? (Preparation and genuine interest are important.)
- Tell me two of your strengths. What, in your opinion, is your greatest weakness?
- What has been your greatest challenge in life?
- What are you most proud of?
- What will you contribute to our college community?
- What would your friends say about you?
- What do you see yourself doing 10 years from now?
- What factors have you considered in choosing your major?
- What book have you read recently (independently of school assignments)?
- What questions do you have for me? (Be prepared with a few questions!)

Always finish the interview with a sincere handshake and follow-up thank you note.