

Somers Senior High School

Forward in Excellence

July 2025

Dear Students, Parents and Guardians,

We want to check-in and remind you of a few important steps to take before returning to school if your plans include applying to college this fall. It is important to remember that everyone will be at different points of readiness to engage in the steps noted below. That's OK. Take the process step by step and accomplish what you can over the next few weeks. This will put you in a good place to begin senior year and make for a far more manageable experience. Keep in mind that while counselors, parents or guardians will support students with these steps, it is essential that students be the primary drivers of this process to ensure the best outcomes. To keep your information organized, we've created a [Class of 2026 Info and Links](#) on the SHS Guidance and Counseling web page.

This July & August:

- Review your **transcript** for accuracy in your online Campus Backpack. Timely communication of any discrepancy noted is important. If you have a question, please reach out to Ms. Gambelli in the SHS Counseling Office (914-248-8603).
- Create a [Common Application account](#) and begin to complete it in parts. Your work will be saved and rolled over to the 2025-2026 Common App on 8/1. [Common Application Workshops](#) will be available through the College & Career Center in late August.
- Brainstorm possible essay topics and jot down notes for a rough draft. Come into September with a **rough draft of your essay** using the [Common App essay prompts](#). The main essay and any short answer essays will require the most dedicated time and energy. You may wish to take advantage of the PTSA sponsored [College Essay Writing Workshop](#). To see some samples and straightforward essay recommendations, utilize the resources compiled [here](#).
- Continue to **research** different colleges, evaluating both academic and personal fit using Naviance for academic matches and tools like [Niche](#) to understand the personal experiences of students at a particular college. [Google Maps](#) street view is also a powerful time-saving tool to see what a campus and surrounding look like before deciding to visit in-person.
- **Tour** the campus of at least one public and one private college (even if they're not at the top of your list). In-person and virtual tours can typically be scheduled on the college's website.
- Ensure that there is understanding within your household of **your financial limits** in paying for college.
- If you haven't already done so, complete the **Junior College Planning Survey** in Naviance under the "About Me" tab. Parents can also complete the Parent Questionnaire in Naviance's Parent Connection.
- If [SAT or ACT testing](#) is planned for the fall, be sure to register in advance of the deadlines.
- Establish a FSA ID on the [FAFSA website](#). Even if you don't believe you're eligible for aid, the FAFSA must be completed to be eligible for scholarships or loans. **We anticipate that this year's FAFSA will open on 10/1.**
- Schedule your **individual senior meeting** with your counselor through the Bookings link that is shared in late August.

This September:

- Attend **College Night for Seniors and Parents on 9/11, at 7pm at SHS.**
- Remind **teachers** of any previous informal requests you'd made for **letters of recommendation** or make initial requests for 1-2 teacher letters of recommendation (refer

to the requirements of your likely list of colleges). **Enter formal requests through Naviance.**

- Counselors will conduct **senior group presentations** beginning 9/15, to review application steps, match Common Application and Naviance accounts, and remind students to set up their **individual senior planning meetings**.
- In addition to meeting with your assigned counselor, schedule an appointment with **Ms. Tracy in the College & Career Center** for additional perspective and application support. Common Application and Self-Reported Academic Record meetings are available throughout the fall.
- Continue to research colleges and revise your main essay and any supplemental essays required.
- For any private colleges you may be applying to, check the **College Board's [CSS Profile](#)** to see if this additional financial aid application is required.

This October:

- Finalize your list of schools and complete an **official transcript request** form with your counselor. Please refer to the deadlines on the form for **Early Action, Early Decision and Rolling applications**.
- Order standardized testing you wish to send (SAT, ACT or both), if required, to colleges to which you will be applying. This is accomplished through the [College Board](#) or [ACT](#) websites.
- **Complete the FAFSA and CSS Profile** (if applicable) and check Net Price Calculators for schools you are interested in attending. These forms should be available on 10/1.
- Counselors will submit school materials (transcript, school profile, counselor letter and Secondary School Report Form) directly to the colleges indicated on the transcript request form electronically via Naviance.

Some students may be applying to specialized programs that follow a slightly different time frame or process, but the above list offers a good guide for most students applying to a four-year college or university. **Like any new or challenging task, the best thing we can do is just start.** In addition to the SHS schedule of evening and push-in programs to ensure students and parents are on track, students are asked to make individual appointments with counselors through the Bookings link, which will be shared in late August. Those students who keep in regular contact with their SHS school counselor throughout the college application process typically report having the most positive experience.

Lastly, a regret that seniors express is not having visited more campuses. While deciding where to apply and completing applications seems difficult at the time, each April students and parents share that the more difficult part is choosing between their acceptances and the different tuition packages. Having been on a campus typically makes for an easier decision-making process. For important reminders and essential information on the admissions process, be sure to utilize the **Class of 2026 Info and Links**, and the **SHS College Planning Guide**, found on the SHS [Guidance and Counseling web page](#) and see attached advice from students and parents.

Enjoy the rest of your summer, and we'll see you in September!

Sincerely,
The SHS Counseling Department

Frequently Asked Questions When Completing the Common App

- 1) What is the School CEEB Code? 335-245
- 2) Counseling Center Fax- (914) 248-5286
- 3) What is your Counselor's Information?

Counselor	Email:	Business Telephone
Carino, Angelo	accarino@somersschools.org	(914) 248-8585 ext. 4302
Cawley, Eileen	ecawley@somersschools.org	(914) 248-8585 ext. 4306
Pappas, Cherlyne	cpappas@somersschools.org	(914) 248-8585 ext. 4304
Rivero, Annia	arivero@somersschools.org	(914) 248-8585 ext. 4305

- 4) What is the information needed for the Common Application?
 - We Do Not Rank
 - GPA is Weighted
 - 100 Point grading scale
 - Class Size = 214 (as of June 2025)
 - Graduation date is June 24, 2026
 - SHS address: 120 Primrose Street, Lincolndale, NY 10540
- 5) How do I list my Activities?
 - Activities- Maximum of 10- Prioritize
- 6) How can I send my senior year grades to colleges?
 - There is a form to request first quarter grades; midyear grades will be sent to all colleges automatically for every student
- 7) How do I file my Early Decision (ED) agreement?
 - Early Decision (ED) agreement must be signed electronically by the student, parent, and counselor

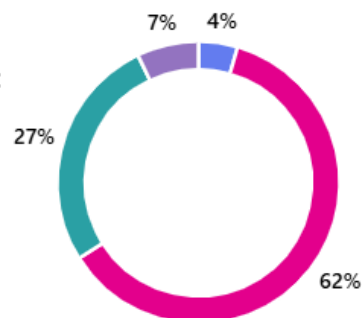
Keys to a Successful (lower stress) College Application Process From Parents of the Classes of 2024 and 2025

Parent advice:

- *They all find where they are meant to be at the end of the day. Senior year goes by very fast, so try to enjoy the time with your senior*
- *Your way of doing things may not align with the way your child is comfortable doing them. Be there to support their process and make it easier for them but try not to get upset when they don't go about things the way you think they "should".*
- *Work like a team – parent, student and counselor. Reach out to the counselor as soon as possible when you feel you're stuck and don't know what to do!*
- *Start early, especially with the college essays (ideally the summer before senior year when essay topics are released). The PTSA sponsored essay workshop in the summer was great - got the essay out of the way.*
- *Really look at the schools your child is applying to and make sure it makes sense/is a good fit. We spent a lot of money applying to schools my child had no intention of attending.*
- *Begin applications early... before Senior year! The year is very busy! It was a relief to have everything finished to concentrate on school courses.*
- *Be sure to complete the FAFSA to be considered for scholarships!*
- *See colleges earlier rather than later. It really helps to streamline the process and just have a certain mile radius in mind to condense the list. When doing a tour, if your kid is really turned off by the school - leave don't finish the tour.*
- *Don't stress your child out, they are stressed enough. Colleges put a lot of pressure on students.*
- *Drown out an external noise. Listen to your child and work together to try to meet their needs and interest. You'll get through it.*

Please indicate how stressful you considered the college application process:

- Not stressful at all - it was a breeze
- Kind of stressful, but manageable
- Pretty stressful- we struggled at times
- Off the charts stressful - we felt like we barely made it!



Keys to a Successful (lower stress) College Application Process From Students of the Class of 2025

- *Don't wait to get started, you should be starting over the summer!*
- *Start applying as soon as possible and don't put off or procrastinate when doing this application process, because then it will become more stressful if you don't get it out of the way earlier.*
- *Start Early. Have everything sent out by October at the latest so that you can enjoy senior year.*
- *If I could offer one piece of advice to next year's seniors about applying to college or managing senior year, I would tell them to just focus on what they've got going on. It can be hard with everyone applying to the same schools, people talking about their supplements, talking about SAT/ACT scores, or how many schools they're applying to. It's best to not fall to the pressure of those expectations and take your time with applying.*
- *Finish filling out the entire common app including the essay before the start of the school year so all you have to do is write supplements.*
- *Do not go into massive amounts of debt by choosing a certain school.*
- *Don't stress about it, everyone will eventually end up where they are supposed to be.*
- *Schedule regular check-ins with your counselor to make sure you're up to date with deadlines and application processes.*
- *It's easier than you think it is, just stay on top of your part of it (the essays, SAT, etc.)*
- *Stay organized and research different colleges, and see what students say about the school not just information the school puts out.*
- *My one piece of advice would be to always follow your heart and don't let the pressure of going to a big school affect your decisions because any college is a good college when your heart and mind are in it.*
- *If you really know you're not going to end up at the school, don't apply just to see if you get in and spend \$100 on the application.*
- *Don't fixate on one school. Have OPTIONS. The right school will come to you. Ranking does not matter. I got into the exact same schools as kids with stronger academic records than me. I also got waitlisted from schools with higher acceptance rates than ones I ended up getting into, so don't fixate on those numbers. Just enjoy it while you can, and trust that gut instinct because it is probably right.*
- *Actually go to class.*