

2025-2026 The College Application Process Reference Guide SENIORS

****The College Application Manager, Transcripts & Letters of Recommendation can be processed through SchoolLinks beginning August 15, 2025****

To access your SchoolLinks account, go to your student resource page <https://resources.svsd.net> and click on the SchoolLinks icon page. Seneca Valley School District will appear in the next screen. The last step is to click on "Log-in using Active Directory."

****STUDENTS: If the system prompts you to Log-in, use your SV USERNAME@svsd.net & SV PASSWORD in the spaces.**

****PLEASE NOTE: ALLOW 5 SCHOOL DAYS FOR SENECA VALLEY SHS TO PROCESS ANY TRANSCRIPTS****

Once a senior adds a college/university (after August 15th) to their SCHOOLINKS COLLEGE APPLICATIONS section (under the Colleges Tab), transcripts will **AUTOMATICALLY** be processed – seniors **DO NOT** have to request them.

If a school requires the Self-Reported Academic Record (SRAR), you still **MUST ADD THOSE SCHOOLS** to the College Applications section under the Colleges Tab and indicate that a SRAR was completed (Pitt and Penn State are examples that require the SRAR). On the SRAR, you will report all of your high school courses and grades. You should copy them exactly as they appear on your transcript. Be careful and accurate when reporting because these schools will require a final transcript if you choose to attend there. To assist you with transcript accuracy, you can access your UNOFFICIAL transcript from your student portal.

General Application Guidelines

All applications are done online.

1. Read the directions! Follow them!
2. Start early and save often.
4. Graduation is **May 28, 2026**, your graduation year is **2026** and your class size is **595**.
5. Be sure that you are using your FULL NAME. It must match exactly what is on your transcript and test scores. (If your name is Jonathan and you go by John, you need to use Jonathan).
6. Be sure to check deadlines and requirements and make sure that all elements of the application are submitted before the deadline.
7. It's acceptable to send various parts of your application at different times. Colleges will collect and compile your application components until complete (application, test scores, transcript, recommendations, etc.) and put them into your student file. Once all of the required pieces are there, it's a complete application. It does not matter the order in which it was received.
8. When writing an essay that has a maximum "character" requirement, this includes everything you type including spaces, numbers, punctuation marks, etc. Make sure to answer the question(s).
9. Have a trusted person proofread your application and essays. College essays can be submitted to your English teacher during the school year.
10. If you are asked to report your GPA, (and it does not indicate "weighted" or "unweighted"), list your weighted.

Test Scores—Check institutions to evaluate SAT/ACT options respective to college admission, choice of major, and scholarship opportunities:

TEST-OPTIONAL MAY STILL BE A CHOICE-HOWEVER SOME COLLEGES ARE NOW REQUIRING THEM AS IN THE PAST!!

SVHS **DOES NOT** report scores on the transcript.

- Students are responsible for sending colleges and universities their official SAT and/or ACT scores. Request your scores be sent directly from the SAT or ACT websites (there is a fee for each score requested). It can take at least **3 weeks** for colleges to receive those scores.
- If your highest sub score is across multiple ACT/SAT scores, you may want to send all ACT/SAT scores containing them. This is also required for the schools that super score.

COLLEGE APPLICATION OPTIONS

1. *School Specific – Online Application

Most colleges and universities offer access to applications through their websites. If you want to apply directly to a college, university, or career/technical school, you can access these applications through their website or SchoolLinks. ***Some students find using school specific applications easier than using the Common Application, especially if applying to less than 4-5 schools.**

2. Common Application and “Common Errors”

Before connecting your Common Application to SchoolLinks, complete the following steps:

1. **Create a Common App account first with your own personal email (not SVSD email).**
2. Add Seneca Valley High School as your current high school.
3. Add at least one college to your Common App account.
1. Sign the FERPA (Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act) Request Authorization Form. Students often do not know which FERPA box to check and may check the wrong box. We strongly suggest students waive their right to access information, as it makes letters of recommendation more credible. **YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GO BACK AND CHANGE YOUR ANSWER ONCE A RECOMMENDER HAS SUBMITTED** or you send out an application.

To connect accounts with SchoolLinks:

2. In SchoolLinks, under the Colleges tab (left tab of dashboard), click on College Applications, then Connect (under External Accounts-bottom left).
3. Instructions will appear based on whether a Common App account was created.
4. You will log in to Common App or be directed to create an account. Next, you will Agree to terms and Click Connect.
5. You will be redirected back to SchoolLinks where your colleges will be populated from Common App.

3. Coalition Application

1. If you are applying via Coalition, you **MUST** check the box that states you will send documents externally from the application.
2. Request all documents through SchoolLinks as you would for any other institution.

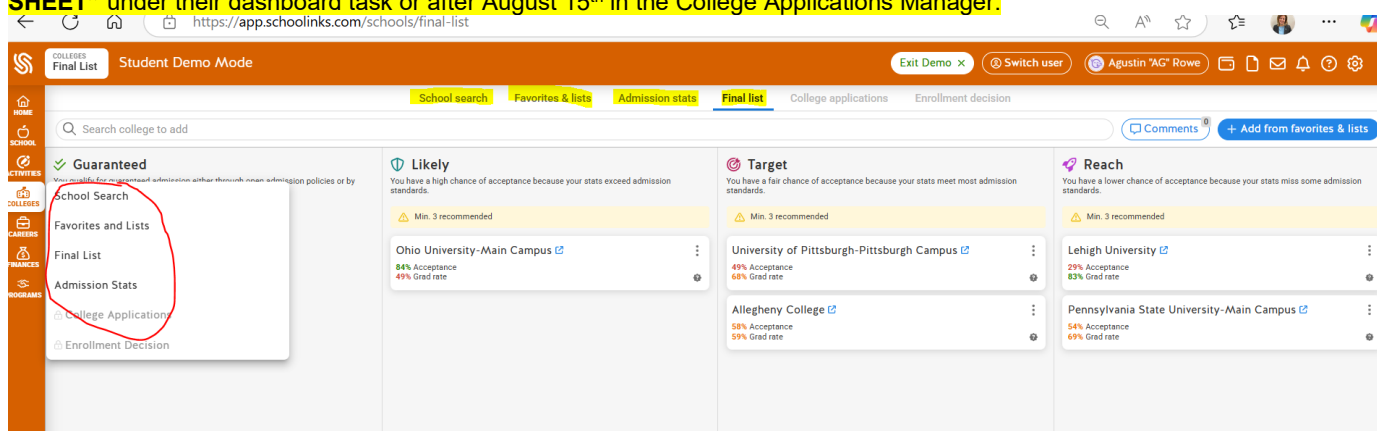
Getting Ready to Process Transcript Information for College Applications and Scholarships

To process transcripts for college applications, all students must complete the following first:

1. Have your PARENT/GUARDIAN complete the **Parent Release Authorization after July 1st** in the SV parent portal.
 - a. Log-in to SV parent portal
 - b. Click on the SchoolLinks icon
 - c. Authorize the release of student transcripts

***PLEASE NOTE: Completing the Parent Release Authorization does not provide authorization instantaneously. It can take up to one week to process this step. Please plan accordingly.**

2. **Update your student profile page** in SchoolLinks by clicking on your name (top right) of your Dashboard. Be sure to complete the My Story, Experiences, Bragging Rights and Academics sections.
3. **Remember August 15th** is the first time you can begin using the College Applications Manager in SchoolLinks.
4. **At this time, students can be working on the School Searches, Favorites & Lists, Admission Stats, and Final List components of SchoolLinks (see below) in preparation for college applications. Additionally, students can be completing/updating the “BRAG SHEET” under their dashboard task or after August 15th in the College Applications Manager.**



5. If parents/guardians haven't created an SV Parent "view only" SchoolLinks account, please do so by sharing a unique parent /guardian link to use in creating their account. Students can find this link under the Gear icon (top right) of their dashboard and click on Settings, then Your Guardians. Students can then copy the link and share it. This account gives parent/guardians access to view student's college and career readiness journey including viewing college applications.

How to Set-up the College Applications Manager

College Application Manager Overview

The College Application Manager is a tool used by students to:

- request application documents, such as transcripts and letters of recommendation,
- manage & track application requirements,
- add application results, and
- indicate enrollment decisions

The College Application Manager is **not** where students submit their college applications. Applications are submitted directly on college websites or through applications portals such as Common App, Coalition, Questbridge, etc...

SchoolLinks has a partnership with Common App !! This partnership simplifies the process of requesting and tracking application documents onto a single dashboard for students. Learn more [Student: Connect Your Common App Account | SchoolLinks Help Center](#)

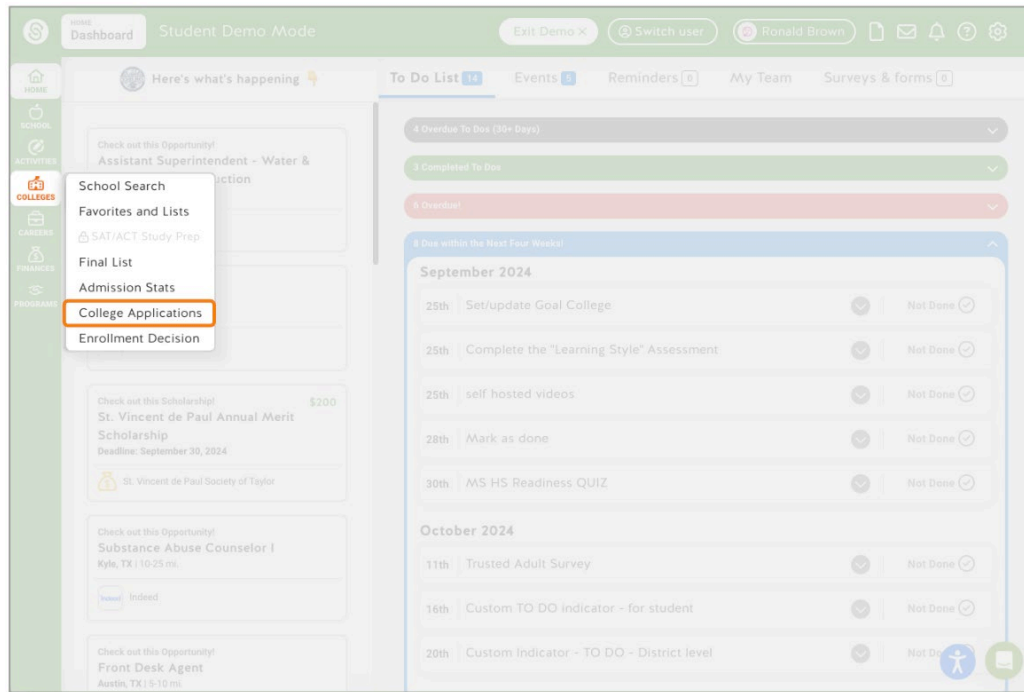
STUDENTS MUST BE LOGGED IN TO SCHOOLINKS TO VIEW THIS ARTICLE

Set up College Application Manager

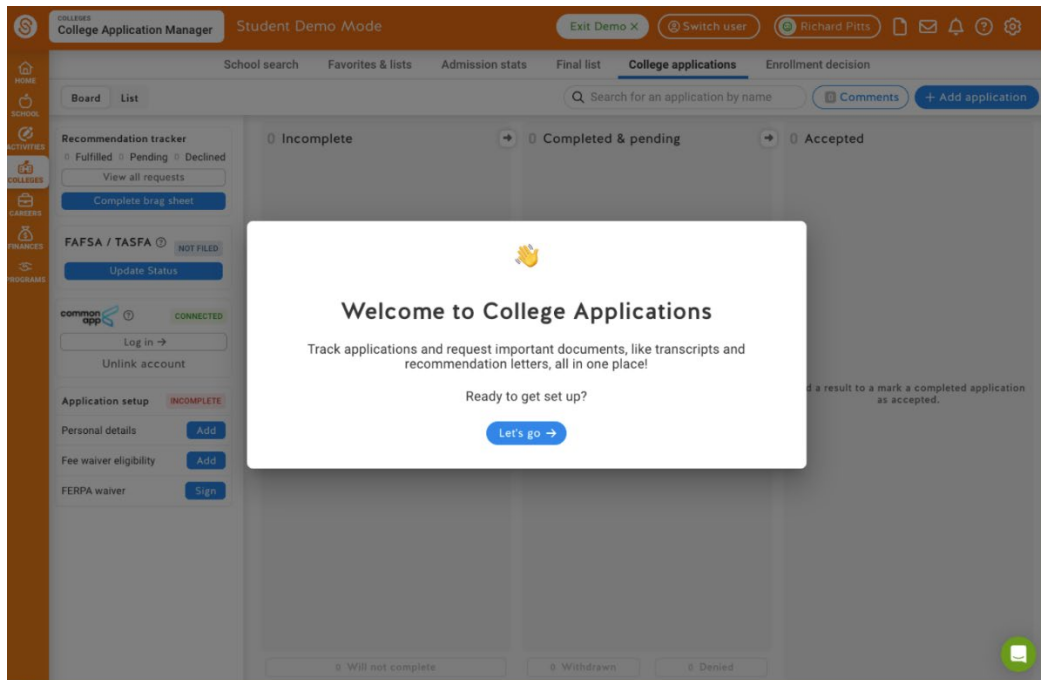
The first-time students access the College Application Manager, they will be prompted to complete a three-part setup process. Follow the steps below to get set up!

Access

Click **Colleges** in the side navigation bar, then select **College Applications**



Click **Let's go** on the Welcome to College Applications window



Personal Details

Add the required **Personal Details**

**Note: this information is required for certain documents requested by colleges and can be edited at any time.*

The screenshot shows the 'College Application Manager' interface in 'Student Demo Mode'. The 'College applications' tab is active. A modal form titled 'Personal information' is displayed, with a progress bar at the top showing 'PERSONAL DETAILS' as the current step, followed by 'FEE WAIVER ELIGIBILITY' and 'FERPA WAIVER'. The form contains the following sections:

- Personal information:** A note states, 'Use the same information you are using in your college application forms.' Below this is a 'Birthdate' field with a calendar icon and a placeholder 'MM/DD/YY'.
- Home address:** A note states, 'Use the same home address you are using in your college application forms. This is needed for some documents your counselor needs to send to colleges.' Below this are fields for 'Street Address', 'Apt, suite, etc (optional)', 'City', 'State' (a dropdown menu), and 'Zip/postal code'.
- A note at the bottom of the address section says: 'When you add or update your address here, SchoolLinks will update the address for your account.'
- A 'Next →' button is located at the bottom right of the form.

The background interface includes a sidebar with icons for Home, School, Activities, Colleges, Careers, Finances, and Programs. The top navigation bar includes 'School search', 'Favorites & lists', 'Admission stats', 'Final list', 'College applications', and 'Enrollment decision'. The 'College applications' section has a search bar and buttons for 'Comments' and '+ Add application'.

Fee Waiver Eligibility

Indicate Fee Waiver Eligibility

**Note: if marked as eligible, a required Fee Waiver document will be added for the counselor to complete. Eligibility can be edited at any time.*

The screenshot shows the 'College Application Manager' interface in 'Student Demo Mode'. The 'College applications' tab is active. A modal form titled 'Do you qualify for an application fee waiver?' is displayed, with a progress bar at the top showing 'PERSONAL DETAILS' as the previous step, 'FEE WAIVER ELIGIBILITY' as the current step, and 'FERPA WAIVER' as the next step. The form contains the following sections:

- Do you qualify for an application fee waiver?:** A note states, 'The cost of applying to colleges can add up! Some colleges waive application fees for students who demonstrate financial need. To see if you qualify, check off any boxes that apply to you.'
- A list of checkboxes for qualification criteria:
 - ☐ Student has received or is eligible to receive an ACT or SAT testing fee waiver.
 - ☐ Student is enrolled in or eligible to participate in the Federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch program (FRPL).
 - ☐ Student's annual family income falls within the income Eligibility Guidelines set by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service.
 - ☐ Student is enrolled in a federal, state or local program that aids students from low-income families (e.g. TRIO programs such as Upward Bound).
 - ☐ Student's family receives public assistance.
 - ☐ Student lives in federally subsidized public housing, a foster home, or is homeless.
 - ☐ Student is a ward of the state or an orphan.
- A radio button option: ☐ None of the above apply.
- A note at the bottom states: 'In Common App and Coalition you can request a fee waiver through your MyCoalition or Common App profile. For other applications, we'll help you see if you qualify and request a fee waiver from your counselor if you do.'
- 'Back' and 'Next →' buttons are located at the bottom of the form.

The background interface is identical to the previous screenshot, showing the 'College Application Manager' sidebar and top navigation bar.

FERPA Waiver

FERPA gives you the right to review confidential letters of recommendation under certain circumstances if one of the following conditions are met:

- You are enrolled in college and that college saves the recommendations for enrolled students
- You are 18 or older.

Waiving your right lets colleges know that you do not intend to read your recommendations, which helps reassure colleges that the letters are candid and truthful.

Important Note: Common App requires its own FERPA waiver to be signed

Complete & electronically sign the **FERPA Waiver**

**Note: Once you sign your FERPA Waiver decision, you cannot change it within the platform. However, if you selected the wrong option,*

you could contact SchoolLinks support via the support icon in the bottom right corner to request a change. Keep in mind that after your application documents have been sent, your FERPA Waiver decision **cannot** be changed by anyone.

Complete the FERPA waiver

You might be asking yourself "What's FERPA?" Don't worry, you're not alone! Here's what you need to know:

How does FERPA relate to your college application?

- FERPA gives you the right to review letters of recommendation if you are enrolled in college that saves the recommendations, OR you are 18 or older.

To waive or not to waive?

- Waiving your right lets colleges know that you don't intend to read your recommendations, which helps reassure colleges that the letters are candid and truthful.
- If you choose not to waive your right, some recommenders may decline to write a letter for you, and some colleges may disregard letters submitted on your behalf.

Still unsure how to respond?

- That is OK. Many students are. Before you move on, take a moment to discuss your decision with your counselor, another school official, or your parent/legal guardian. You can also read our [FERPA Help Article](#).

☐ I have fully read and understood the FERPA Release Authorization explanation above.

[Back](#) [Finish application setup](#)

Complete Brag Sheet

***Note:** Your brag sheet highlights your experiences and accomplishments to help recommenders write letters of recommendation.

1. Click **Complete brag sheet** in the Recommendation tracker section.
2. Complete the questions and click **Submit**

Student Brag Sheet

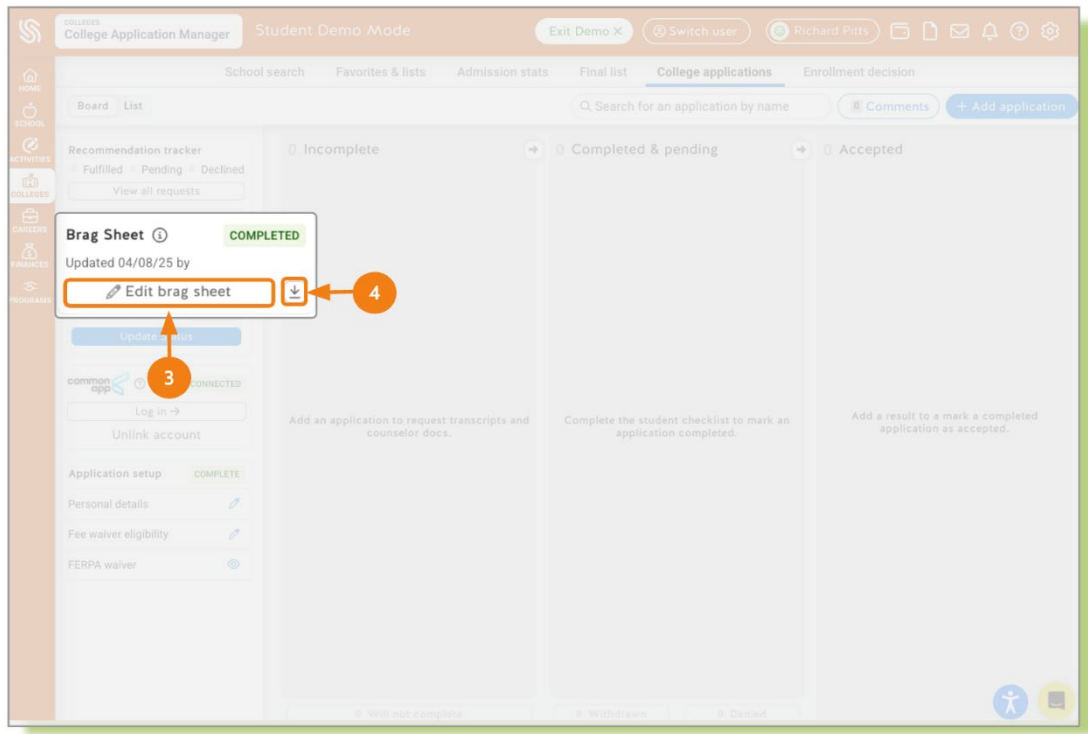
What career goals or career areas of interest are you pursuing in the future?

List any academic coursework that support your future plans:

List any personal or academic experiences that support your future plans (ie job)

[Cancel](#) [Submit](#)

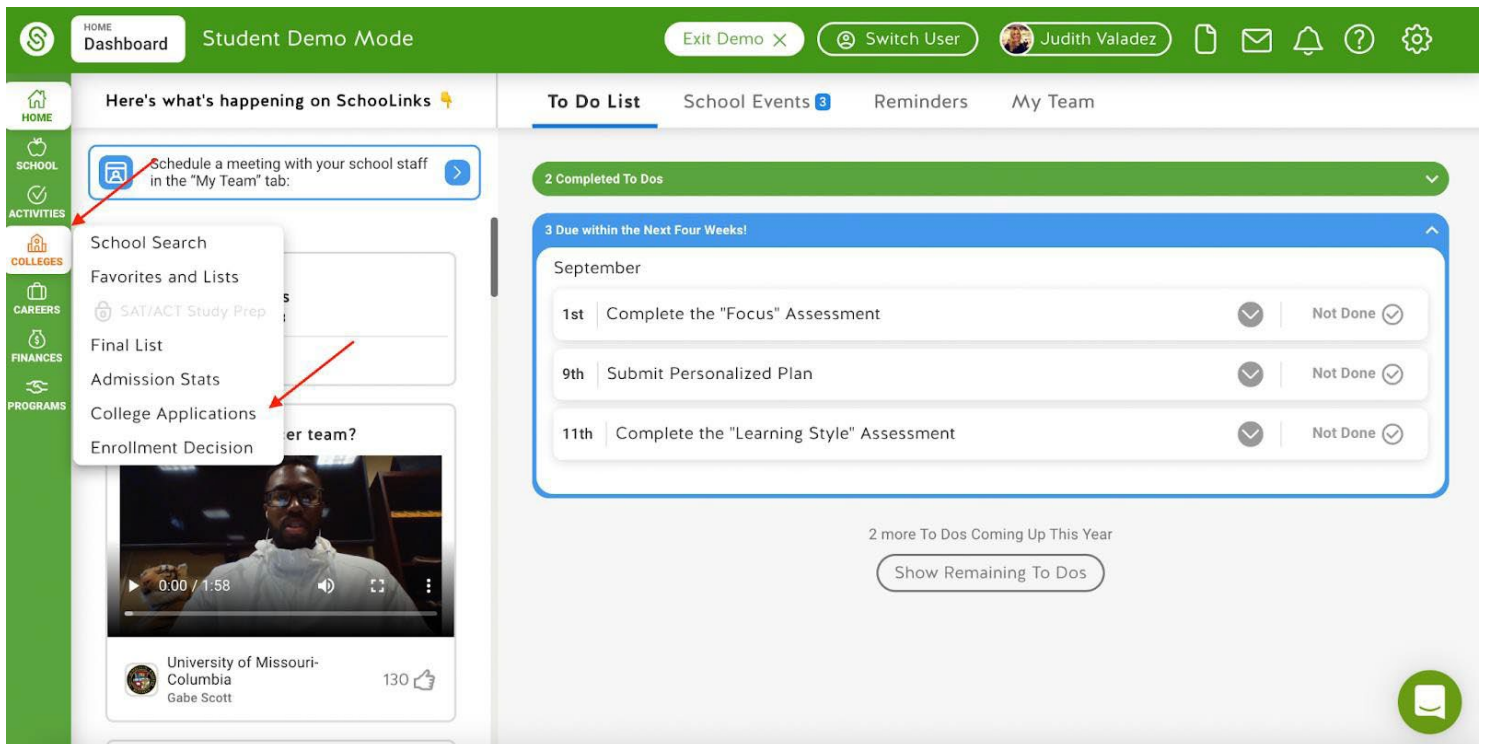
3. Click **Edit brag sheet** to make changes
4. Click the download icon to download your brag sheet as a PDF



How to Process Transcripts in SchooLinks for College Applications

Accessing Application Manager

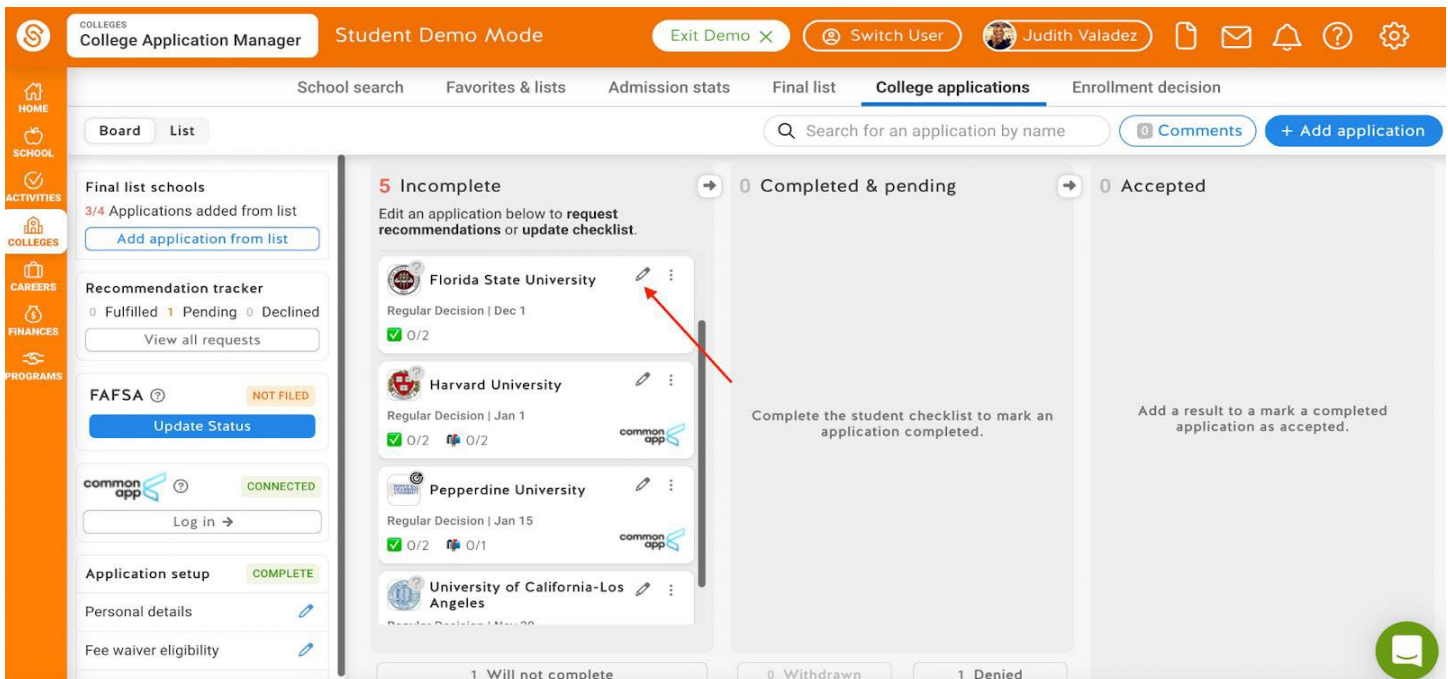
Hover over the **Colleges** icon and click **College Applications**



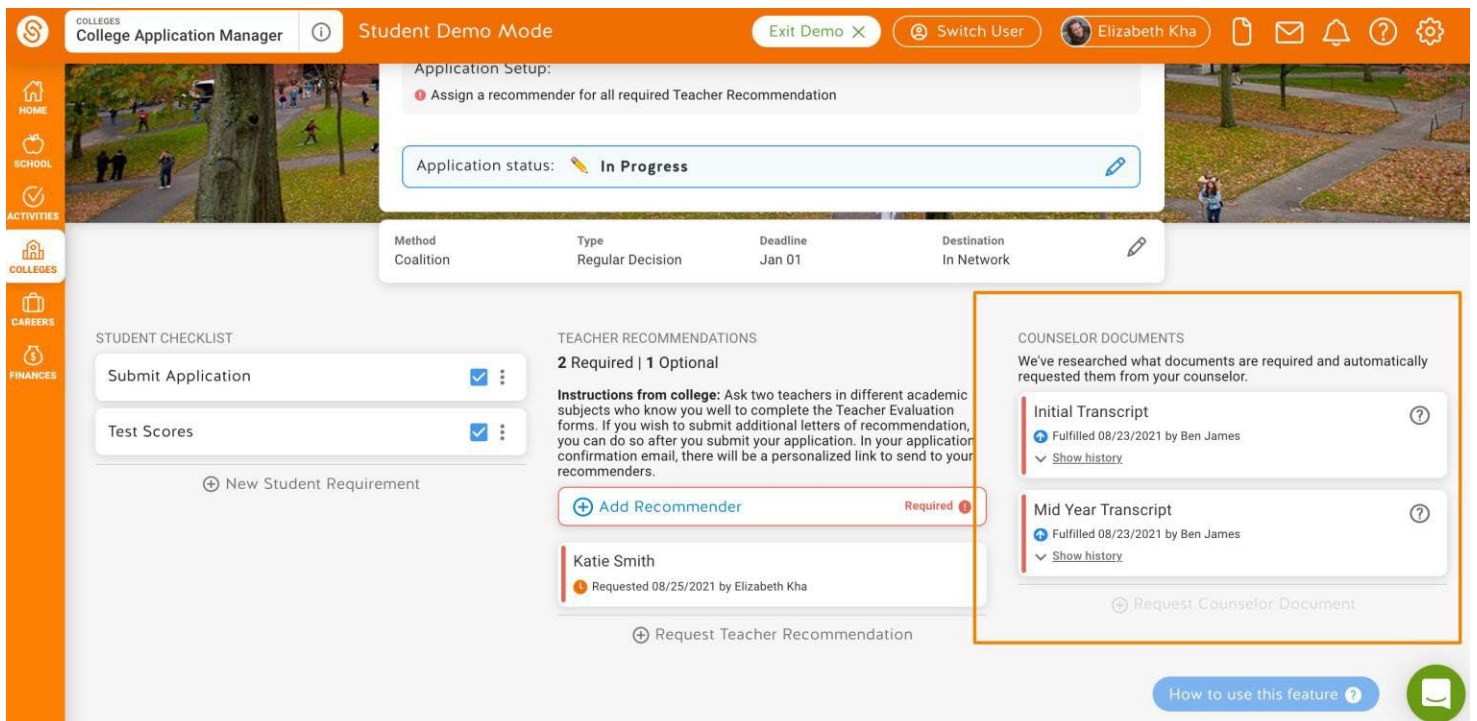
For initial or midyear transcripts

Click on Add application if the college/university is not there (if you connect to Common Application, they will appear from that application) or Add application from your Final list schools (top left of dashboard) . You can edit an application or update your checklist by clicking on the pencil icon. If it's a new application, you'll need to click on "Add application from list" in the top right, fill in the details of the type of application, and click

Save Application. Next, you'll see the application details page



Once on the application details page, you will notice that any required documents from counselors (like initial and midyear transcripts) are automatically requested. You do not have the ability to change these requirements, but if there's something you would like added to this list, you can reach out to your counselor in the Message Center.



You can view the history and status of the requested documents by clicking **Show History** for more details. Once the transcript is sent and viewed by the college you will see a Doc ID available from Parchment:

The screenshot shows the Parchment dashboard with three main sections:

- STUDENT CHECKLIST:** Includes 'Applying for Financial Aid?' (Yes/No buttons), 'Submit Application' (checkbox), 'FAFSA Submission' (checkbox), and 'Test Scores' (checkbox).
- TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS:** Shows '3 Optional' recommendations with instructions from the college and a 'Request Teacher Recommendation' button.
- COUNSELOR DOCUMENTS:** Shows a 'Transcript' document with a history of actions: 'Sent via Parchment (Doc ID: [redacted]) 10/08/2021 by L...', 'Fulfilled 09/13/2021 by I...', and 'Added 10/06/2021 as preset'. A 'Hide history' link and a 'Request Counselor Document' button are also visible.

Transcript Processing for Scholarships, Athletics (NCAA, NAIA) and Other

Sometimes you'll need to send a transcript to an organization that's not a college. For example, you might need to send a transcript for a scholarship application, military recruiter or to the NCAA or the NAIA Eligibility Center.

Note: Transcripts are automatically sent when students add the college/university to the College Application section. The steps below are for Other transcript requests.

1. Processing Other Transcript Requests

From the dashboard, click the **School** icon on the left navigation sidebar, then select **Record Requests** from the drop-down menu.

2. Requesting Other Transcript

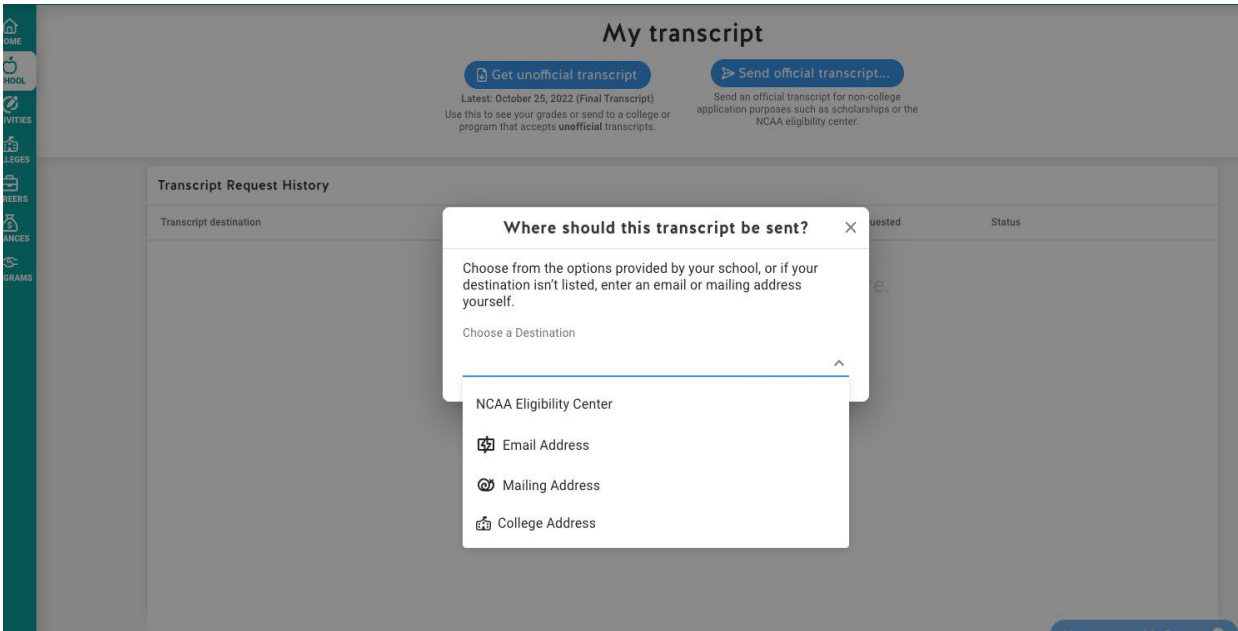
Click the **Send Official Transcript** button.

The screenshot shows the 'My transcript' section with two buttons: 'Get unofficial transcript' and 'Send official transcript...'. An orange arrow points to the 'Send official transcript...' button. Below the buttons is a 'Transcript Request History' table with columns: Transcript destination, Destination type, Doc ID, Date requested, and Status. The table is currently empty, with the text 'Your transcript requests will appear here.' displayed below it.

There are different destinations and different ways you can send your transcript from the dropdown menu:

- NCAA/NAIA Eligibility Center,
- Email Address
- Mailing Address/College Mailing Address (not listed on SchoolLinks)

Select the method you will use to send your transcript.



NCAA/NAIA Eligibility Center

The email address for the NCAA Eligibility Center will automatically appear.
Click **Send Transcript**.

Email Request

Fill in the organization name, receiver name, and receiver email.

Then click **Send Transcript**.

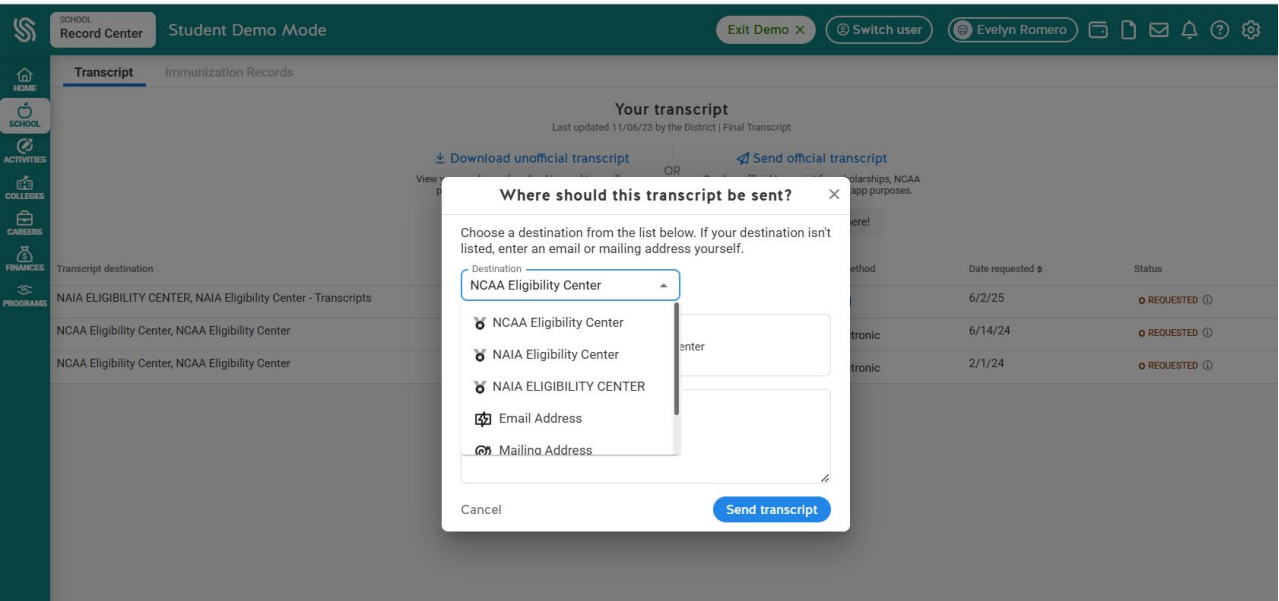
Mail Request

Fill in the organization name, receiver name, and address.

Then click the **USPS Validate** button. This will make sure the address you put in is correct.

You can either select the USPS address or select the address you typed in.

Then click **Send Transcript**.



3. Tracking Transcript Requests

After you send your transcript, you'll see your destination, the date you requested it, and its status.

When the transcript has been sent, you'll see the status change in Transcripts Request History. If the destination type is Electronic, you will also see a Document ID once the recipient receives the transcript.

Use Manage Transcripts to request transcripts for scholarships and athletics and to keep track of your general transcript requests, whether for college applications or scholarships.

Getting ready to request Letters of Recommendation/Teacher Evaluations

Research admissions requirements! Some colleges do not require letters of recommendation and do not want them, some list them as optional, and others may require one or two.

Directions

1. Be sure to ask your teacher/counselor in person **BEFORE** submitting your requests. * **PLEASE NOTE:** Give your recommenders at least 2 weeks to write your letter. Last minute requests may not be honored or could result in a generic letter. Don't forget to write a thank you! *
2. As you complete your applications, request and keep track of letter of recommendation requests in SchoolLinks.
3. Follow up in person to make sure teachers have received your request.
4. Counselor letters of recommendation will be completed only if an institution requires them. Your School Counselor will automatically complete Common App recommendations. You must make an appointment to meet with your School Counselor for all other requests.

DO NOT request a teacher letter of recommendation through the Common Application! SVHS is a SchoolLinks school. Counselor and teacher letters of recommendation will be sent electronically through SchoolLinks.

Letters written by teachers or adults outside of SVHS need to be sent by mail or electronically through the Common Application as “**Other Recommender**” or if it is for a Non-Common Application school, all letters can be sent from SchoolLinks.

Recommenders spend a tremendous amount of time writing letters. If you asked a teacher/counselor for a letter of recommendation but **no longer need one, please inform them IMMEDIATELY!**

Access the following articles for step-by-step instructions and screen shots when processing college applications:

STUDENTS MUST BE LOGGED IN TO SCHOOLINKS TO VIEW THESE ARTICLES

Add a College Application and Request Application Documents – <https://support.schoolinks.com/en/articles/4513204-student-add-a-college-application-and-request-application-documents>

Request and Track Letters of Recommendation - <https://support.schoolinks.com/en/articles/10012297-student-request-and-track-teacher-recommendations>

College Events (Rep Visits, College & Career Speaker Series, Fairs)

SVHS hosts various post-secondary events including:

- Rep Visits: students have opportunities to meet with college representatives at the Senior High School. Attending a college rep visit or having a conversation with a college representative shows demonstrated interest. Colleges want to see that you are interested in them and believe you are a good fit.
- College & Career Speaker Series: students and parents have opportunities to attend college and/or career informational sessions. Topics vary each month.

Students **MUST** sign up to attend these events through their SchoolLinks account.

Directions

1. In SchoolLinks Click on **School Events** at the top of the dashboard homepage. Scroll down to view events.
2. Click on **title of event** to get a description and click on **Register** if you would like to attend.
3. A green registration message appears at the top of the **School Events** page. Either screen shot or print this page, as it will be your pass to attend the event.

Scholarships

Scholarship opportunities are posted in SchoolLinks.

To access National scholarships, click on **Finance Tab (on left)**, go to **Scholarship Matching > Indicate Eligibility, Interest & Colleges and view Matches. Favorite any interested Scholarships.**

Learn more 🖱️ ***STUDENTS MUST BE LOGGED IN TO SCHOOLINKS TO VIEW THIS ARTICLE***

- <https://support.schoolinks.com/en/articles/4513181-student-how-to-use-scholarship-matching>
- To search scholarships locally and what SV advertises, go to **District-Posted**. Some programs/scholarships require the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE to be completed, in addition to their own application. Check your colleges'/programs' information to determine whether they require the PROFILE.

Our local scholarship packet will be available to students in mid-February. It consists of:

- General Scholarships- open to anyone pursuing post-secondary education.
- Specific/Limited Scholarships- unique to a group of students i.e., students that will be attending a specific college, declared a certain major, lives in a specific zip code, etc.
- For more information on scholarships and a guide to search for SV Scholarships, please visit our guidance website here: <https://shs.svgsd.net/guidance/guidance/college/scholarships>