



# Applying to College

Class of 2026



## Class of 2025

74% Attended a 4-Year College

13% Attended a 2-Year College

7% Sought Employment

2% Other Post-secondary

1% Enlisted in the Military

**This presentation is geared toward the application process, BUT we know there are many of you who might not apply to college - that's ok! Counselors want to help you plan for after high school...whatever that is.**



# Overview

- Important Dates
- College Search
- College Visits
- Standardized Testing
- Timeline
- Application Triangle of Doom
- Common Application/Naviance
- Letters of Recommendation
- Financial Aid/Scholarships



# Important Dates

- Make an appointment with your counselor. Stop by, Google Form, or Schoology message Mrs. Michelle Cole.
- Transcripts - Uploaded to Naviance by 9/22 (possibly sooner)
- Financial Aid Night - Monday, 9/29 in the HS Aud
- SAT@CHS - 11/8, Register by 10/24
- ACT@CHS - 10/18, Late Registration deadline is 9/30
- WNY Colleges in LMC - Tuesday, 10/21
- Schoology Announcements
- Admissions Reps in the Counseling Office! Register in Naviance

The screenshot shows the Naviance website interface. The top navigation bar includes links for Home, Self-Discovery, Courses, Careers, **College Visits**, and Planner. The 'College Visits' section is active, displaying a list of college visits for September 21st. The first entry is Merrimack College, with a 'DEADLINE PASSED' status. The second entry is Westminster College, with a 'REGISTER BY Tuesday, Sep 21 2021, 10:15AM' deadline and a 'Register Now' button circled in red. The third entry is Pace University, Westchester Campus, with a 'REGISTER BY Tuesday, Sep 21 2021, 11:45AM' deadline and a 'Register Now' button. Each entry also includes a 'View Details' link.

College	Date	Time	Status	Action
Merrimack College	Tue 21	09:00AM	DEADLINE PASSED	View Details
Westminster College	Tue 21	11:15AM	REGISTER BY Tuesday, Sep 21 2021, 10:15AM	Register Now View Details
Pace University, Westchester Campus	Tue 21	12:45PM	REGISTER BY Tuesday, Sep 21 2021, 11:45AM	Register Now View Details



# Big Decisions

- The process can be stressful.
- Don't let it overwhelm you; consistent, small steps will get you to the finish line.
- Set up a weekly/biweekly\* meeting with your parents. Jam all the college talk into that timeframe so it's not constantly overwhelming all of you.

\*That means every other week. :)



# Search

- Do you have a list? If not then it's time to make one.
- Use online sites like Naviance, College Board and College Scorecard.
- Gather as much info about schools as you can.
- Meet with Admissions Reps in the Guidance Office.
- Talk to people around you about their college search - friends, relatives, teachers.
- Look at the school's course catalog, but know that most of you will change majors.
- Have an open and honest conversation with your parents about their expectations?



# Visit

- Easily the best way to learn about a school.
- Sign up for an appointment in advance through the college's website.
- Try to attend an Open House if possible; professors are generally there.
- Use the admissions office and tours, but don't be afraid to get off the beaten path.
- Take notes on our impressions of the school on the ride home; things tend to blend together after a few visits, so good notes will help keep everything straight.
- Virtual visits have improved a LOT, but it's still best to visit in-person if possible.



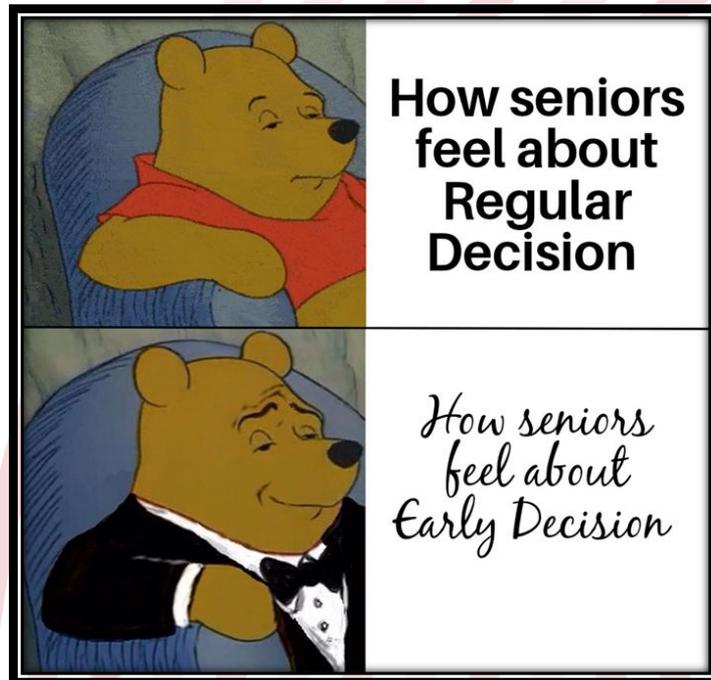
# Standardized Tests

- Check the school's testing policies on their website, but almost ALL schools are test-optional. Submitting a score *could* help you.
- Find out the % of students who submitted a score from last year. Do they require tests for merit aid?
- Scores must be sent directly from the testing institution (ACT or College Board).
- Almost all colleges will superscore.



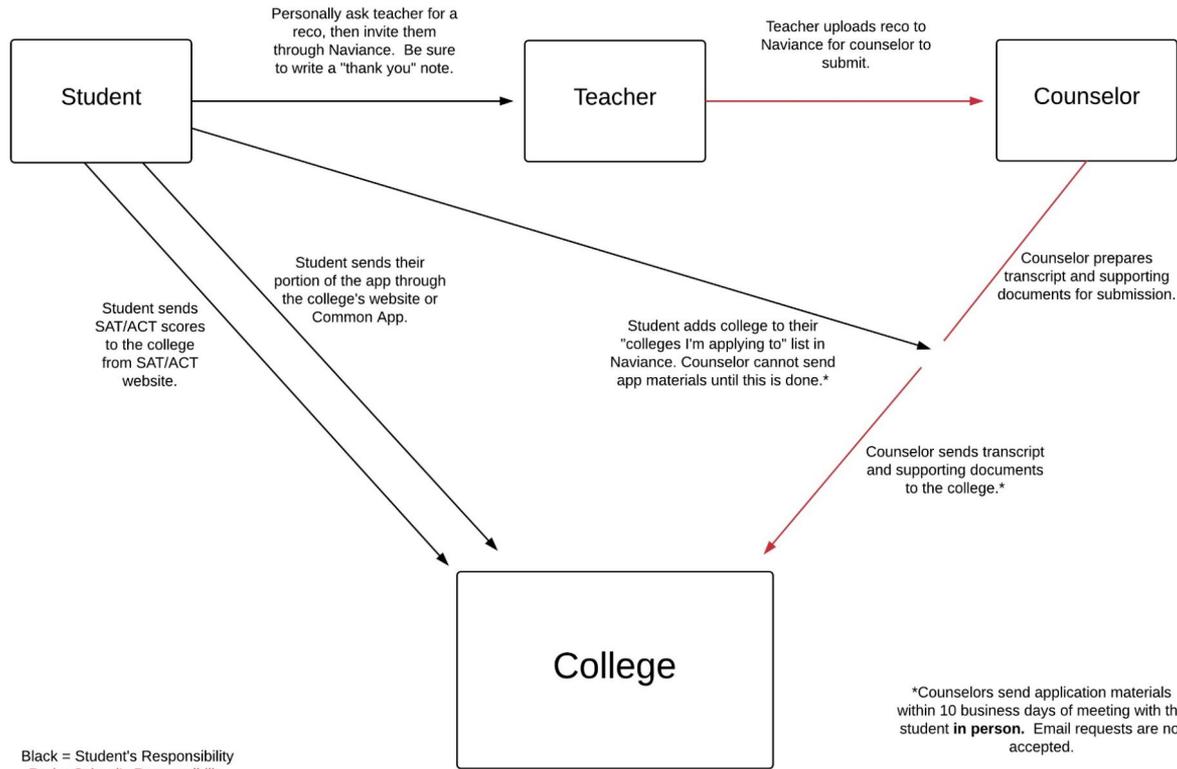
# Timeline

- Try to apply by Thanksgiving.
- Generally no bonus points for early appliers.
- Be sure to have at least one school you can: get into, afford, want to go to.
- EA accelerates the process - no real downside.
- ED is a binding commitment, but can increase your chances of admission.
- Be *certain* about your ED school.





# College Application Triangle...of **DOOM**\*\*



\*Counselors send application materials within 10 business days of meeting with the student **in person**. Email requests are not accepted.

\*\*Doom? Eh, why not, it's a joke. This is important, but we don't need to take it so seriously. Take a deep breath and relax. :)



## Ways to Apply

- There are several ways to apply - Common App, SUNY app, Institutional app. Don't default to the Common App, it might be more efficient to do multiple apps than the CA.
- Common App resources are on the Guidance website.
- Start by filling out the demographic info. That will help break the ice and ease you into the application.
- FERPA Release
- Do NOT use the SUNY app for ECC or NCCC (unless it's during free application weeks).



# Naviance

- Naviance is the way counselors submit the school's portion of your application (transcript, recs, forms, etc.) to colleges.
- You must “match” in Naviance if you're using the Common App. CA requires you to complete the FERPA release and add at least one school *before* it allows you to match.
- Add schools to “colleges I'm applying to.” CA will auto-populate the list for you once you match.
- Invite teachers to submit letters
- Do NOT request your transcript - we need to meet with you in-person before we can send it.



You must complete the FERPA waiver in Common App before you can “match” in Naviance.

The screenshot shows the Common App mobile interface. On the left, the 'My Colleges' menu is visible, with 'Recommendations and FERPA' highlighted in red. The main content area displays the 'Recommendations and FERPA' section, which is also highlighted in red. A dialog box titled 'Release authorization' is open, showing instructions for the FERPA waiver process. The dialog box includes the following text:

**Release authorization**

**Instructions**

The next screen will ask you two important questions about your release of and access to your educational records under FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Since FERPA is a complex law, we want to provide some key information before you respond. We encourage you to learn about FERPA by [reading our FAQ](#). We also suggest discussing FERPA with your counselor, parent, guardian, or other school official to be better informed about your rights.

- 1. How does FERPA relate to your college application?**
  - FERPA regulates educational institutions' obligation to protect the privacy of student education records. This can include your application to the college where you enroll. FERPA also gives you the right to review and inspect your education records. The confidential letters of recommendation issued by your high school or their staff may be part of those records.
- 2. In a moment, you'll be asked if you want to waive the right to review these confidential letters of recommendation. What should you know about this waiver?**
  - 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.
  - Some recommenders may decline to write a letter for you if you do not waive your rights. Check with your counselor or teachers to see if any of them follow such a policy.
- 3. Still unsure how to respond?**
  - That's 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. For more information about FERPA, visit the [Help Center](#).

I have read and understood the FERPA Release

**Continue**



NAVIANCE BY POWERSCHOOL

Home Self-Discovery Courses Careers **Colleges** Planner

12th Grade DR About Me CLOSE DEMO

Colleges I'm applying to

It looks like you are not currently able to apply to Common App schools. Match your Common App account to Naviance Student account to get started.

Match Accounts

Manage Transcripts Compare Me

+ extended profile available + REQUEST TRANSCRIPTS REMOVE

College that I'm attending:

N/A Update

Letters of recommendation

Some colleges require letters of recommendation to be submitted with your application. Please visit the letters of recommendation section, accessible from the main colleges page, for more information

### Connect your Common App

First year student? Great! Enter your email and password below to sign in, or [create an account](#) to get started.

\* Indicates required fields.

Email \*

Password \*

[Forgot password?](#)

Sign in

Need help?  
[Visit the Applicant Solutions Center.](#)

### Hi, Nicholas!

By checking the box below you will enable Naviance to access certain information from your Common App account that is necessary for integration and processing.

If you authorize this connection, you will be granting permission to Naviance to:

- See the status of your applications and recommendations
- View additional Common App data in order to support submitting recommendations on your behalf

I agree \*

Cancel Connect



✓ **Confirmation**  
Successfully matched!

Add any non-Common App Schools with the "+" button. Close

### Colleges I'm applying to

Search for colleges

✓ **Your Common App account has been matched.**  
Your FERPA status is waived. You're ready to apply to colleges using Common App.

All the schools in your Common App list populate below.

No need to "Request Transcripts" - we need to meet with you individually before sending. These requests are NOT monitored.

Manage Transcripts Compare Me **+**

+ = extended profile available

+ REQUEST TRANSCRIPTS REMOVE

College	Type	Deadline	Transcripts	Office materials	Submission Type	Application
<input type="checkbox"/> + Brown University	RD	Regular Decision January 5	no request	Pending	CA	Unknown <span>▼</span> <span>EDIT</span> <span>MORE</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> + Canisius College	RD	Regular Decision July 27	no request	Pending	CA	Unknown <span>▼</span> <span>EDIT</span> <span>MORE</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> Duquesne University	RD	Regular Decision January 15	no request	Pending	CA	Unknown <span>▼</span> <span>EDIT</span> <span>MORE</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> + Gannon University	ROLL	Rolling July 28	no request	Pending	CA	Unknown <span>▼</span> <span>EDIT</span> <span>MORE</span>



# Letters of Recommendation

- Most schools only require one or two (if any). Find out how many you need *before* asking.
- Ask teachers whose class you performed well in AND you established a good relationship with.
- Ask in-person, *then* invite through Naviance.
- Write a “thank you” note - it’s common courtesy. Keep in mind that every letter takes at *least* an hour to write.
- Some schools require a counselor letter



# Requesting a Letter in Naviance

Letters of recommendation

Your Requests

You can request new letters of recommendation and track the most recent status of your requests here.

[Add Request](#)

Recommendation For	Deadline	Recommender(s)	Status	Cancel Request
 Your recommendation requests will show up here.				

[Add Request](#)

Letters of recommendation

Add new request

Here you can ask a teacher to write you a letter of recommendation. Make sure you give your teachers plenty of time to write your recommendations!

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

1. Who would you like to write this recommendation?\*

Bello, Rosanna  **Select the teacher from the drop down.**

2. Select the recommendation request type:\*

**General request**  
*Select this if you are ready to request a recommendation without selecting a specific college*

Specific request  
*Select this if you are requesting a recommendation for specific colleges from your Colleges I'm Applying To list*  
Looks like you don't have colleges in your Colleges I'm Applying To list yet. Click [here](#) to add.

3. Include a personal note to remind your recommender about your great qualities and any specifics about your request:

**In addition to listing some general info about yourself, this is a good opportunity to thank the teacher for writing on your behalf and tell them why you chose them to write for you, what was it about them or their class that you enjoyed...**



# Counseling Office Procedures

- Meet in-person to send materials at least 10 business days before the application is due. We will not act on an application until we meet with you. It's ok to email us a question, but not a request to send materials.
- Find out if your school requires a counselor recommendation. If so, we'll likely need you to fill out a form - each counselor approaches it a little differently. Find out what yours needs.
- Counselors send everything from the school - transcript, teacher letters, secondary school report.
- We keep good records of what was sent and when. It's possible you might get an automated email while things are crossing in cyberspace. **DON'T FREAK OUT.** Come see us and we'll help figure it out.



# Sherpas

- Think of us as guides on this process - we've climbed this mountain\* before and know where some of the tricky spots are.
- *You* still need to climb the mountain\*, no one can do it for you.



\*Important note: climbing a legit mountain is *significantly* harder than applying to college, so don't get too freaked out, we're in it for the metaphor.



# Financial Aid & Scholarships

- FAFSA is available on 10/1. It's important to file as early as possible. Use the **2026-2027** FAFSA.
- Financial Aid Night is Monday, 9/29 in the HS Aud.
- Some private schools require the CSS Profile.
- Use net price calculators to get an early snapshot of what the school might cost.
- The bulk of scholarship \$ awarded is from individual colleges.
- Websites like Fastweb and Going Merry are scholarship databases that can match you with possible scholarships.
- We post a number of local scholarships on our website each month.
- In February, students can apply for ~40 scholarships given to CHS seniors through one application.



# Essay

The essay is a critical piece of the application. It's the only thing you really have control over at this point. Get feedback from others, but make sure YOUR "voice" is loud and clear. Have a strong introduction. Try to use vivid imagery. SHOW don't TELL. Make sure it's grammatically flawless, but it doesn't need to be super formal, again, your voice should come through. Don't reiterate your resume. Try to answer the question throughout the essay, that will help keep you on track. Avoid gimmicks. Less is more. Read the essay out loud; that will help you eliminate filler and unnecessary words.



# Keep in mind with the essay....



**Anna Ivey** @AnnaIvey · 10h

When you asked 10 people for feedback on your Personal Essay





# Good Luck!!!

...and meet with your counselor soon. :)