

Westonka
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Class of 2027

Did you know?

- 66% of class of 2026 indicated that they will be attending a 4-year college.
- That means that on average 34% choose some other postsecondary path.
- Examples of other tracks for the class of 2026:
  - American Institute of Nondestructive Testing
  - 6 different in-state and out-of-state two-year or technical colleges
  - Full-time employment

There are many post-secondary options

Those requiring college applications:

- Public or Private 4-year college/university
- Public or private 2-year college
  - Community college
  - Technical college
    - Certificate
    - Diploma
    - Degree

Those not requiring college applications:

- Military
- Apprenticeship Programs
  - ICATT Apprenticeship
  - Luther Technical Training Center
- Certification courses
  - Real Estate
  - Flight Attendant
  - Cosmetology
- Formal Gap Year Programs
- Full-time work

What to do NOW

Pursuing an option that requires an application:

- Narrow down choices
  - Online research
  - College Fair
  - College Visits
  - College Rep Visits
- Review application requirements and begin the process
- Check transcript
- College Admissions Testing:
  - ACT: www.act.org
  - SAT: www.collegeboard.org

Pursuing an option that DOES NOT require an application:

- Research information about specific options
- Attend information sessions
- Visit program if applicable
- Review the application process
- Check transcript

What to do MEA-June

Pursuing an option that requires an application:

- Complete and submit applications according to the deadlines
- Complete the FAFSA (opens Oct. 1)
- Submit the local scholarship application (opens in Feb.)
- Confirm enrollment
- Request a final transcript

Pursuing an option that DOES NOT require an application:

- Meet with appropriate representatives
- Complete necessary application or other paperwork
- Confirm start date and follow through on any program specific requirements to assure a smooth transition

- Complete the required senior survey at the end of the year

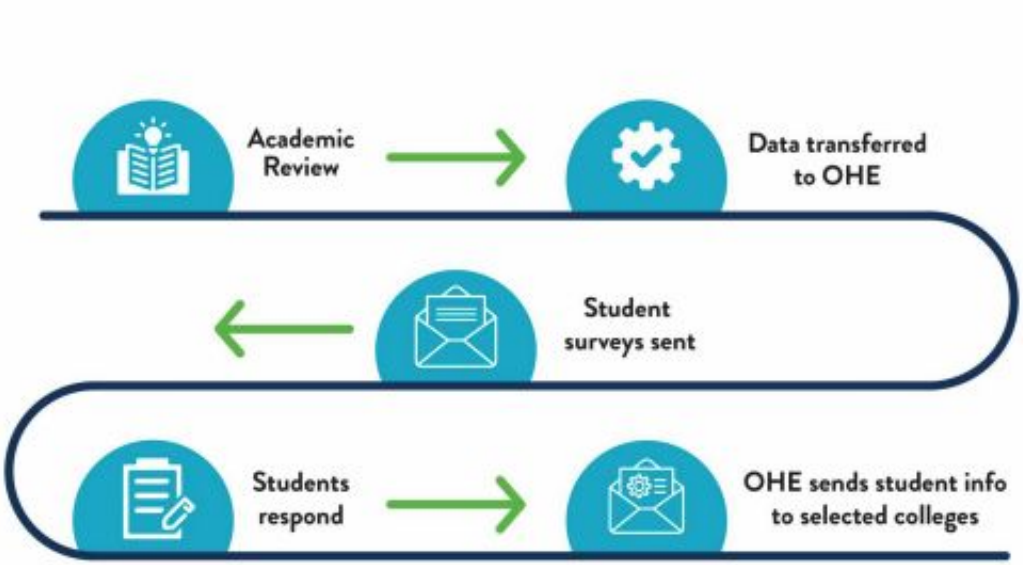


- Funded and coordinated by Minnesota's Office of Higher Education.
- DA revolves around the core belief that all students are college material.
- Promotes college access by:
  - Reducing the anxiety around the "will I get in?" question by offering a "YES!"
  - Developing early connections to and relationships with college admissions' offices.
  - Waiving application fees to DA partnering colleges and universities.

Direct Admissions How does it work?

- Students at Direct Admissions high schools receive a personalized survey in September with a list of colleges and universities committed to admitting them for Fall 2027:
  - All students on track to graduate in spring 2027 are a part of Direct Admissions, *unless they opt-out.*
  - The number of colleges on the list will be determined by unweighted GPA and courses taken in relation to grade level.
  - Over 50 colleges and universities across Minnesota are participating including:
    - 11 public 4-year institutions
    - 16 private colleges
    - 28 2-year colleges

Direct Admissions: How does it work?



MINNESOTA OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Direct Admissions: Student Survey Email

Email will be sent to your school email address and come from the MN Office of Higher Education:

From: **MN_OHE - Do Not Reply** <donotreply.ohe@state.mn.us>
Date: Mon, Sep 29, 2025 at 7:52AM
Subject: Congratulations! Direct Admissions Student Survey

Three part email (lengthy)

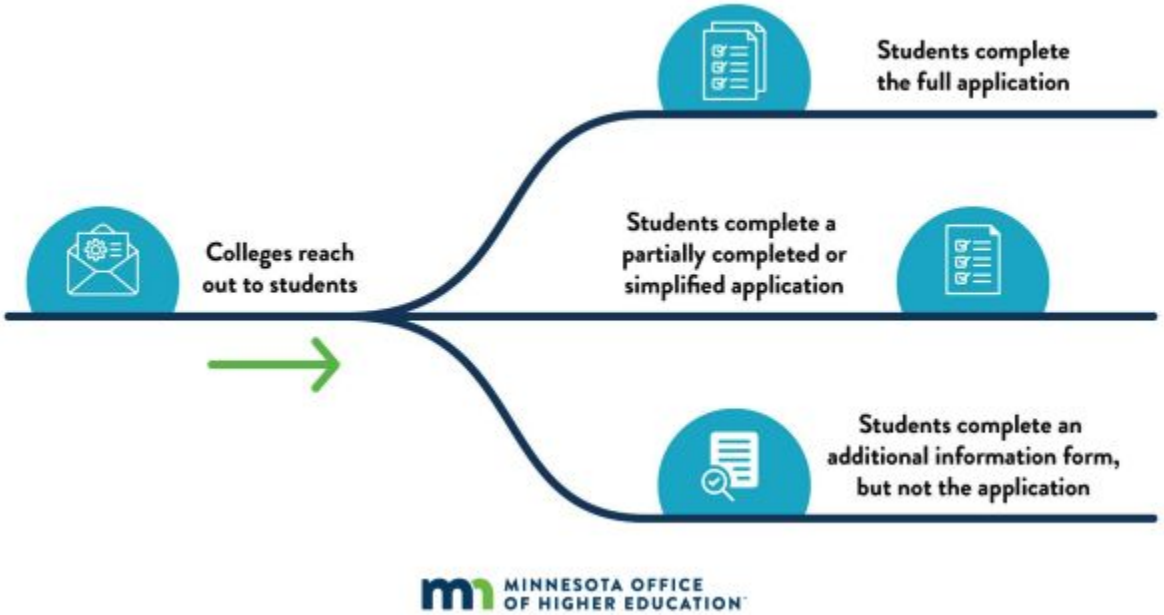
1. TOP: Program introduction
2. MIDDLE: List of colleges that the student is eligible for direct admission to
   - Link to the website for each college
   - Grouped by location within the state and then by category
3. END: Link to the student survey

Please visit this link to request direct admission to colleges or universities from your personalized list.
https://applicationportal.ohe.mn.gov/Direct-Admissions/?ApplicationID=b9fc8dab-389a-f011-b4cb-001dd808e1ca&SurveyCode=6L~RE7d4~0_T4_nU-rq4PW..VU~9Q._79--Dd3K.6GS~2j._7_aTHE7DA.3lYbS-X8Wtyb-f5-41Rg.SK_m6-ShJ~V_8lS~~44md-KzdsE_~-Qa~Oq0j3~D-F16~82nvMm.10M9SfwSS1_XEEViB34n

Direct Admissions: What it means for students

- If a student would like to be directly admitted to any of the colleges/universities on their list, they can select to have their contact information shared with those institutions.
- Students must still complete the college's or university's admissions' process to secure their spot:
  - Application fees are waived
  - Students must meet stated admissions deadlines and supply all requested application materials (check the Direct Admissions Student Center for application dates and any additional information required)
- If a student isn't interested in any of the colleges on their list, they don't need to do anything!
- Students aren't limited to the colleges/universities on their list: this list just helps a student know which schools are proactively committed to saying "yes".

Direct Admissions: Follow-up needed



Direct Admissions: Tips and Resources

- Even though students have been directly admitted, they will still need to complete each college's application process (outlined in the email) by the deadlines to secure their spot.
- If students are interested in postsecondary institutions that are not on their personalized list, they will want to follow the standard application process for the schools they are interested in.
- Check email regularly. Follow instructions thoroughly.
- Resources:
  - Direct Admission Student Center
  - List of Participating MN Colleges
  - Higher Ed MN College Search Tool

Gather information

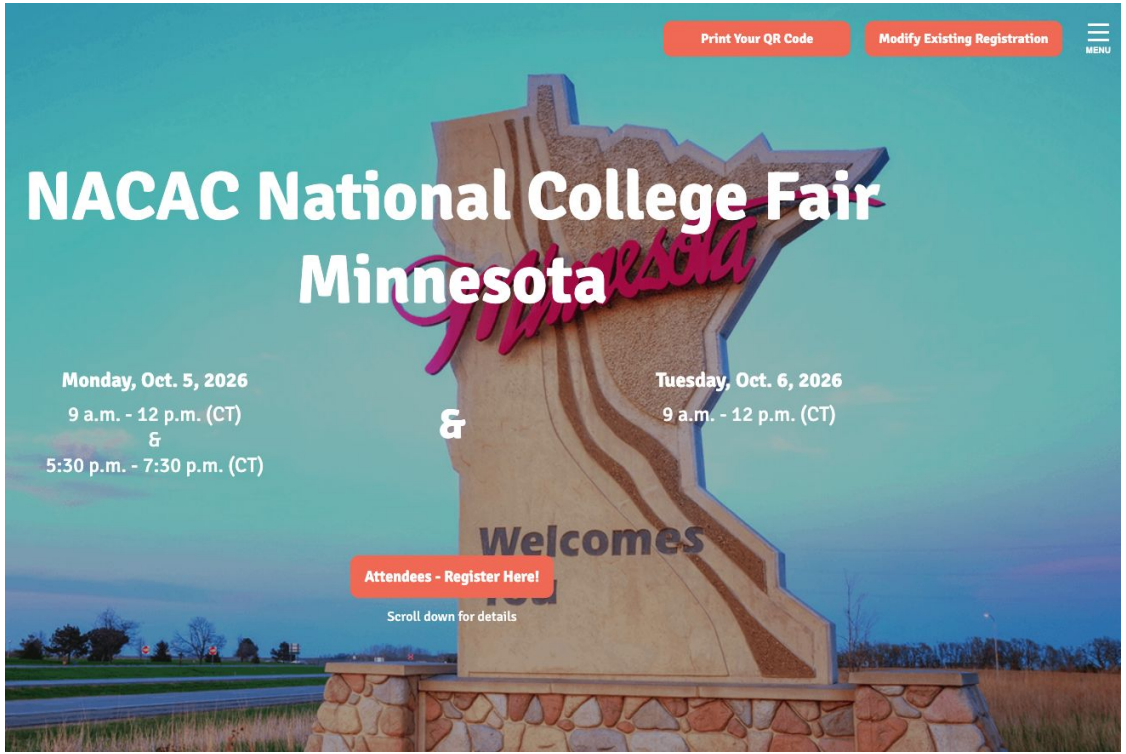
- Discussions with parents, teachers, coaches, older friends, etc.
- Online research
  - MCIS - login through Clever
  - Specific college sites
- Campus visits
- College rep visits
- Minnesota National College Fair (Oct. 5-6)

Upcoming College Rep Visits:

- Announced:
  - Schoology
  - Wake-up Westonka
  - Scrolling announcement
  - Newsletter
- Sign up:
  - Through Hawknet if during WIN.
  - Get pass from Ms. Heier if outside of WIN
- Current scheduled college rep visits:
  - September 17th: North Dakota State University 12:00 PM
  - September 23rd: St. Olaf 12:30 PM
  - September 23rd: Gustavus Adolphus 1:30 PM
  - September 24th: Iowa State University 9:30 AM
  - September 24th: Northern michigan University 10:15 AM
  - October 1st: University of British Columbia 12:00 PM
  - October 20th: Drake University 12:00 PM

NACAC College Fair in MN

- Must register for the event prior to attending
- Over 290 participating colleges and scheduled information sessions



What makes an application complete?

- Application submitted
- Application fee paid
- Transcript sent (through Parchment)*
- Standardized test scores sent
- CSS profile if required by school (you should check their websites for requirements)

***Students using the Common Application do not need to send a transcript through Parchment**

Be aware of different deadlines:

Rolling Decision: Applications will be reviewed as they are accepted.

Regular Decision: Applications are due on a certain date and reviewed in no particular order.

Early Action: Students apply by certain date and are guaranteed a decision by a certain date.

Restrictive Early Action: Non-binding application plan that allows you to apply early while NOT applying early to other schools.

Early Decision: Apply by a certain date and get a decision by a certain date. THIS IS BINDING. Upon Acceptance, the student must withdraw all other application at other institutions.

Different Types of Applications

- **Institutional Application:** published by the college or university only for that particular college or college system. Typically found under “admissions” on college website.
- **Common Application:** a general application that many colleges use for admission. General information is shareable but colleges might have supplemental requirements.

Common Application

- Available at www.commonapp.org
- Need to respond to at least 1 of 7 essay topics
- Supplemental application materials available once students “assign colleges” to their account
- Secondary School Report (completed by counselor). Will include official high school transcript
- Teacher Evaluation Form (teacher will get an email when they are assigned)
- Counselor Form (counselor will get an email when they are assigned)
- Application Guide for First-Year Students - resource

Essays

- An opportunity to bring the applicant to life and share what is NOT in other areas of the application
- Recommended to stay away from talking about a sport/activity unless you are going to talk about a specific personal characteristic or skill that was developed
- Students should be comfortable with doing multiple drafts and digging into the “micro” aspects of things
- How does this narrative make you standout against other applicants and contribute to their campus

Supplements

In addition to your personal statement, you may be asked to submit an additional short/long essay answering a specific question. Examples:

- **University of Wisconsin, Madison**

  Tell us why you decided to apply to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In addition, please include why you are interested in studying the major(s) you have selected. If you selected undecided please describe your areas of possible academic interest. (you may enter up to 650 words). *

- **University of Minnesota, Twin Cities**

  Tell us about your academic and career interests.

  The U of M has 8 freshman-admitting colleges and more than 150 majors. Please share a few words about what you'd like to study in college, career paths that interest you, or your favorite subjects in school.

Letters of Recommendation

- Not all colleges require a recommendation: check before asking
- Recommendation form: might be required INSTEAD of a letter
- Give recommender at least two weeks to write a letter or complete form
- Request in person with a "Recommendation Form" available for reference (should be done before assigned in Common App)
- Thank the recommender via a thank you note
- Brainstorm core teachers you have had that would make good recommenders for your possible area of study

Common App: Education Section

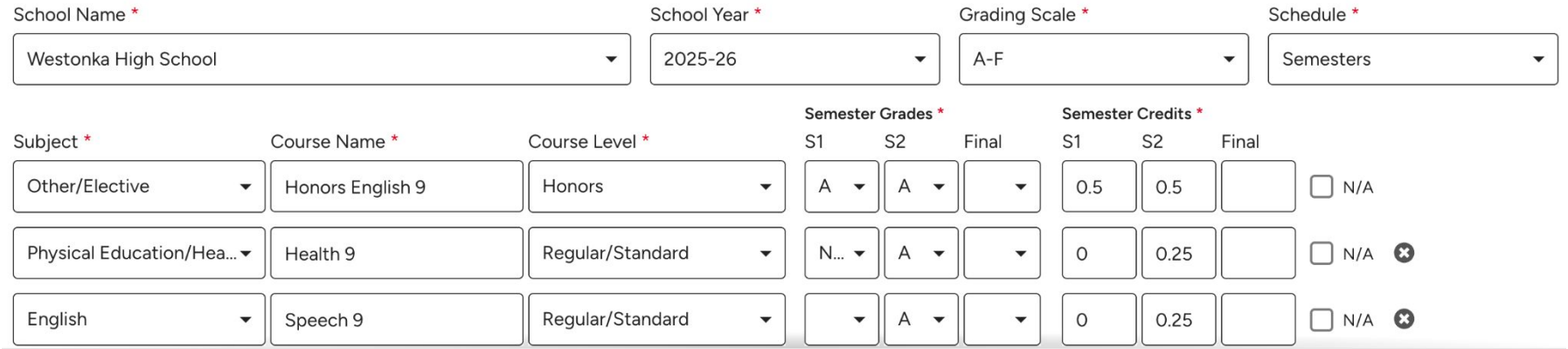
- **Class of 2027:** 162 Students
- **WHS does not report rank:** Select None
- **GPA Reporting Scale:** 4.0
- Unweighted
- If a student enrolled a PSEO or CIS course, they should select that in the “colleges and universities” section and then identify those schools
- Current or Most Recent Year Courses: Students must provide an accurate senior year schedule. If anything changes they need to contact the college

Common App: Courses & Grades

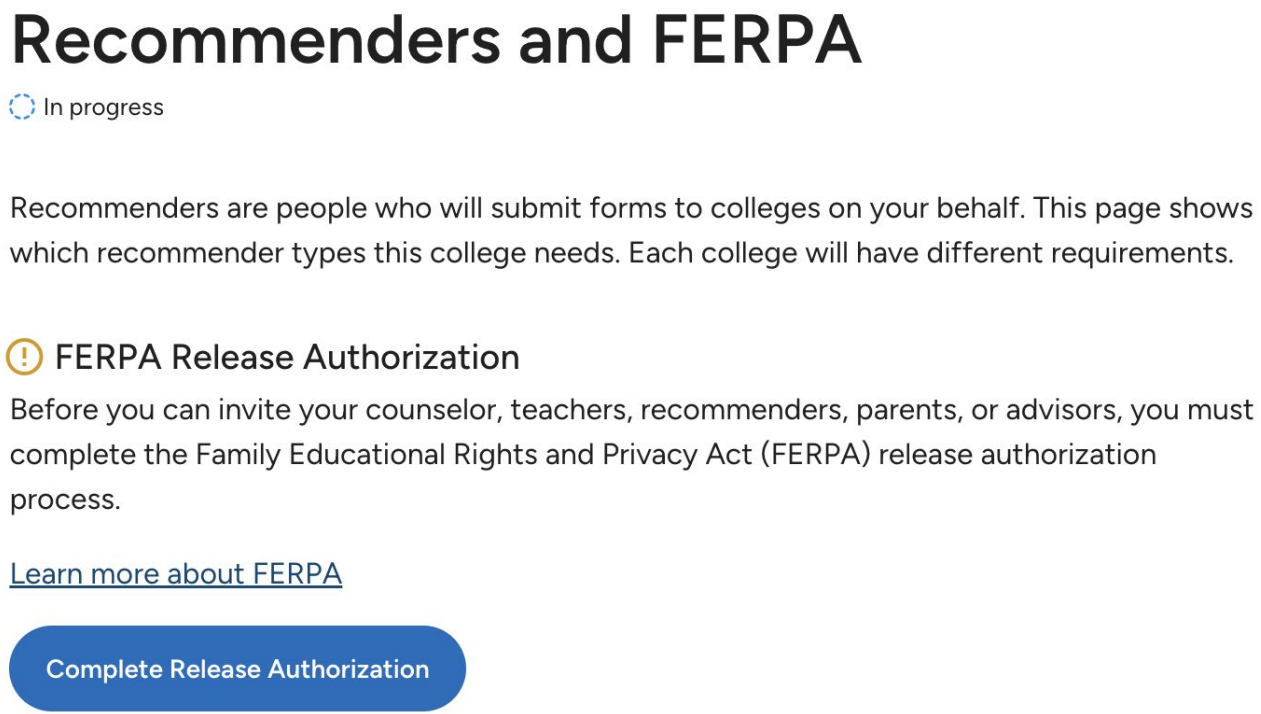
- Grading Scale: A-F
- Schedule: Semesters
- Subject: General Subject
- Course Name: Copy directly from transcript
- Report no final grade and no final credit

Common App: Courses & Grades

- Students need to access a copy of their transcript through Skyward: it's stored in the Portfolio



Common App: Recommenders and FERPA



Common App: Recommenders and FERPA

- Read the instructions carefully
- Once you have completed the waiver, you can add counselor or teachers
- PLEASE use @westonka.k12.mn.us email for all recommenders.
  - kampat@westonka.k12.mn.us
  - baumanna@westonka.k12.mn.us

Sending High School Transcripts

Note: if applying to a college using the Common App, an official transcript will be sent by the counselor through the Secondary School Report. So, no need to request through Parchment

- Parchment: secure electronic transcript delivery service. All transcript requests must go through Parchment if not using the Common App.
- Set up an account. All students will need one to send a final transcript at the end of the year.
- Recommend using a personal email and record username and password. Parchment Support.
- Every time a request is received, the most updated transcript gets sent.

ACT and College Admissions

- Most colleges are test optional through class of 2027; students should check the college website for specific information
- Students should consider test submission rates even at test optional schools
- If students do not submit an ACT, they should assume that other parts (rigor, GPA, activities) will weigh more heavily in the admission decision.
- Students should consider “traditional ACT requirements” when deciding if they should include their ACT score. If it will help their application, they should include it.

ACT and College Admissions

	University of Wisconsin, Madison	University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	Iowa State
Submit %	41	42	57
Average ACT	31	29	25

Sending Test Scores

Sending ACT Scores:

- Refer to MyACT account - set up last year to take District ACT
- Cost $20 per test score
- WHS does not send scores

Retakes:

- Refer to MyACT account
- Registration deadline about 1 month prior to test date
- Upcoming test dates: October 17th and December 12th

Need help?

WHS

- WIN college application help sessions
  - September 24 WIN (CCC): Common App Help Session: Focusing on Activities Statements
  - September 29 WIN (CCC): Common App Help Session: Essay Support
  - October 13 WIN (CCC): Application Support Session
  - October 22 WIN (CCC): Application Support Session
- No matter where you are at in the process, we are here to help
  - Make appointment with Ms. Heier
  - Use QR code
  - Email counselor

Direct Admissions Minnesota

Digital Resources:

- College Essay Guy (web, Instagram, youtube)
- AdmissionsMaven (TikTok, Instagram)

Free Application for Federal Student Aid: FAFSA

- FAFSA opens up on October 1st
- Colleges use the FAFSA to determine how much financial aid students are eligible to receive: grants, scholarships, work-study funds and loans
- Families must apply for aid every year
- Every contributor (student and parents) will need to set up a Studentaid.gov account to complete their portion of the online form
- Step by step instructions on how to complete the FAFSA
- Help center available

Free Application for Federal Student Aid: FAFSA

To avoid delays, you should create your Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID now!

CSS Profile

- The CSS Profile is an online application used by some colleges and scholarship programs to award non-federal institutional aid.
- Completely different process from the FAFSA.
  - Can take longer and will ask for more information
  - Cost
- Common Post-Secondary Users: Ivy League, Selective Liberal Arts Colleges, University of Michigan, UVA, UNC. Check complete list here

Scholarships

- Local Scholarship Program - more information to come out in February
  - Awarded over $300,000 to class of 2026
  - WHS students only
- Financial Aid Office of the college/university that you plan to attend
- Employers or service organizations that your parents or other family members belong to
- National scholarship search sites:
  - Scholarships List in MCIS (under the EDUCATION tab)
  - Fastweb
  - Finaid
  - Scholarships.com

Deadlines are Important

There are a variety of deadlines for admission, honors programs, scholarships and financial aid. Schools typically do a good job providing this information on their website and through follow up emails. Seniors need to keep track of these communications from the colleges.

- Consider using an entirely new email just for college applications
- Create a folder for just college communications that can be sorted through later

Important takeaways

- Add you counselor to your Common App using the westonka.k12.mn.us email
- Common App - official transcripts is sent by a counselor as part of SSR
- Institutional App - need to request official transcript through Parchment
- Copy of your transcript available in Skyward to report grades as needed
- Provide a completed WHS Recommendation Form when requesting recommendations.

Important dates:

- WIN September 24th and 29th: optional common app help sessions
- WIN October 13th and 22nd: optional general college application help sessions
- October 1st: FAFSA opens
- October 5th-6th: National College Fair in MN
- February 11th: Local scholarship application WIN session - application opens