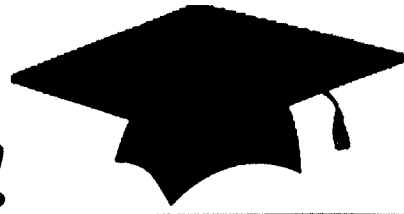


Senior Year!!!!



Congratulations class of 2021! You have come a long way. Give yourself a pat on the back for getting to this point. It wasn't easy and required a lot of hard work! And before we know it, graduation will be right around the corner.

We are going to have a busy year this year, but make sure you have some fun at the same time. Each of you will be planning for your life after graduation and that looks different for all of you.

COLLEGE: There are a variety of steps to the college application process, and it can get tiring and confusing, especially as you add more colleges to your list. *Please refer to the 'College Application Process' page in this packet.* Attached is a timeline and additional information to help you along the way. It is highly recommended you have a calendar just for college stuff. You can write on deadlines (test dates and registration, application, financial aid, scholarships), college visits, interviews, etc.

EMPLOYMENT: Even though you may not be planning on entering the work world after graduation, there is planning involved in this too! This year is a good time to prepare a resume, practice for interviews, and start looking to see what jobs are out there in your area of interest. As you consider jobs, see if there are certifications that you can earn as you work, or if the employer will pay for additional schooling. This can help you be more marketable for future jobs or promotions.

The more prepared and knowledgeable you are, the more confident you will feel!

SERVICE: Maybe you are planning on taking some time after graduation to do some type of service. You have the world in front of you. Service opportunities are endless. Spending time in service also requires a good amount of planning. It is good to begin researching organizations and places to serve. Do you want to stay local? Overseas? Short-term? Long-term? Cost involved? You will want to prepare yourself to speak with organizations of interest and have questions prepared to ask. Stop by guidance if you are interested in learning more about organizations with service opportunities and how to best prepare choosing the right one for you.

Your guidance counselor is here to help! Please stop by Guidance and talk with Mrs. Leaman as you have questions.

College Planning Timeline

As you begin to determine where you want to apply to college, it is important that you look at the college website and get a good understanding of their application process and deadlines.

FALL:

- SAT/ACT: There is still time to bump up that score if necessary. The next SAT date is September 26. Next ACT date is September 12. Check out the kiosk by Guidance Office for all testing dates or visit SAT (www.collegeboard.org) and ACT (www.act.org) websites. *Some colleges are going test optional this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Check out the college websites for their requirements.*

- Finish up visiting colleges. Meet with admission counselors. They can give you great information about their college! It also helps them get to know you a bit.

If you are not able to visit colleges of interest, you can 'tour' colleges using your SCOIR account. There is a 'wall' of campus pictures and many great videos of virtual tours, academics, dorms, student life, etc.

- Use your SCOIR account to manage your college application process. See attached instruction sheet.
- Consider creating a Common Application account. The Common Application website may be useful for you to use depending on the colleges you are applying to. If the colleges participate in this, it can save time as the general application information can be used by all the colleges who are part of Common App.
- Prepare early decision/early action applications as soon as possible. Deadline is generally in November but check individual college website.
- Most common regular decision deadlines are in January.
- Aim to apply to colleges you would seriously consider by Thanksgiving.
- You will be asking teachers for letters of recommendation. Out of courtesy, give your teachers at least 1-2 weeks advanced notice of when you need them submitted.
- FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). This will need to be completed to apply for most financial aid. The FAFSA is available to complete beginning October 1. www.fafsa.ed.gov.

- CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE may need to be completed. This is used by some colleges and scholarship programs to determine eligibility.
- Become knowledgeable about costs/financial aid. Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) www.pheaa.org is a good resource for college planning and financial aid information.

SPRING:

- Keep active in school.
- Compare financial aid packages from the schools you were accepted.
- Inform colleges of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission by May 1. Send in deposit to school you've decided on attending.
- If you are taking AP classes, decide whether you want to take the AP exam. A good score can earn you credit in college or advanced placement.
- Watch for scholarship opportunities that our Guidance Office will announce.

As you get accepted to college, it is still important to maintain good academics throughout the year. Colleges will still want reports from Senior year.

A word about scholarships:

Scholarship opportunities can be found locally as well as nationally. Locally, check with your church, your/parent work place, community service organizations.

Here are a few good sites that provide financial and scholarship information/searches:

College Board (www.collegeboard.org)

Fastweb (www.fastweb.com)

Education Planner (www.educationplanner.org)

PHEAA (www.pheaa.org)

Be aware that there are scams out there. You should NOT pay for scholarship applications.

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

SCOIR WILL BE THE CENTRAL SYSTEM FOR YOU TO MANAGE YOUR APPLICATIONS AND ASSIST US IN PROVIDING YOUR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO COMPLETE THE APPLICATION PROCESS.

PLEASE FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Login to your SCOIR account: <https://app.scoir.com/signin> or if you have not created an account yet, please use this link: <https://app.scoir.com/signup?hsid=392149>.
2. Go to Colleges & Applications. Under My College tab, add the colleges that you are applying to. There is no need to separately request transcripts as once you add your colleges to the applying column, your counselor will know to send your transcript in addition to other supporting documents.
3. Review and sign the FERPA waiver and release form. It is recommended you do waive your rights to give your recommenders the freedom to provide complete and balanced perspectives.
4. If you are applying ED (Early Decision), when you note that within SCOIR, you will be prompted to complete an ED contract to receive necessary signatures.
5. Letters of recommendation—see separate section below to request letters.

**SCOIR is not how you apply to your colleges. It is the managing system. You will still apply to colleges through whatever means you choose. IF you apply through Common App or Coalition App, it is important you read the sections below.

COMMON APP

If you are applying to colleges via Common App, it is important that you use this guide to help you complete Common App in connection with SCOIR. These are very clear and easy instructions. In your SCOIR account, click on the 'SCOIR Guide to Common App' under the link section of your page. Or, click on this link:

<https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/2626201/SCOIR%20Guide%20to%20Completing%20Recommenders%20Section%20of%20CommonApp.pdf>

COALITION APP

If you are applying to colleges via Coalition App, it is important that you use this guide to help you complete the Coalition App in connection with SCOIR. These are very clear and easy instructions. In your SCOIR account, click on the 'SCOIR Guide to Coalition App' under the link section of your page. Or, click on this link:

[https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/2626201/Coalition%20App%20\(SCOIR\).pdf](https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/2626201/Coalition%20App%20(SCOIR).pdf)

REQUESTING TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

To request a recommendation, follow these steps.

1. Go to the My Colleges page.
2. Click the **Request a Recommendation** button.
3. Search for the teacher you're requesting to provide a recommendation.
4. Specify whether or not you'd like the recommendation to be for a specific college. If the recommendation is college specific, select the college to which you would like the recommendation to be sent.
5. Compose the request by editing the Subject and the Message. Once you're finished, click **Send**.

Download the SCOIR mobile app for easy access anywhere!

SENDING SAT/ACT SCORES:

Most colleges require applicants to send SAT and ACT scores directly from the testing websites. To send SAT scores, go to your account on www.collegeboard.org and follow the steps outlined to send your scores. For ACT, go to www.act.org.

A few highlights about SCOIR:

Check out the 'links' on your page. You can use them to register for SAT/ACT tests or be directed to Common App or Coalition App if that is how you choose to apply to colleges.

Browse the SCOIR Blog in the link section to gain valuable information about college admissions, prep, and much more!

If you are collegebound but don't know where to start:

START HERE: [SCOIR Student Application \[Video Overview\] - User Guide and Support Documentation](#) This is a 10 minute overview of the features of SCOIR and how it can help you discover careers, colleges, and manage the application process.

Guide to College Lingo!

Deferred Admission

Permission from a college that has accepted you to postpone enrolling in the college. The postponement is usually for up to one year.

Early Action (EA)

An option to submit your applications before the regular deadlines. When you apply early action, you get admission decisions from colleges earlier than usual. Early action plans are not binding, which means that you do not have to enroll in a college if you are accepted early action. Some colleges have an early action option called EA II, which has a later application deadline than their regular EA plan.

Early Decision (ED)

An option to submit an application to your first-choice college before the regular deadline. When you apply early decision, you get an admission decision earlier than usual. Early decision plans are binding. You agree to enroll in the college immediately if admitted and offered a financial aid package that meets your needs. Some colleges have an early decision option called ED II, which has a later application deadline than their regular ED plan.

Open Admission

A policy of accepting any high school graduate, no matter what his or her grades are, until all spaces in the incoming class are filled. Almost all two-year community colleges have an open-admission policy. However, a college with a general open-admission policy may have admission requirements for certain programs.

Rolling Admission

An admission policy of considering each application as soon as all required information (such as high school records and test scores) has been received, rather than setting an application deadline and reviewing applications in a batch. Colleges that use a rolling admission policy usually notify applicants of admission decisions quickly.

Waiting List

The list of applicants who may be admitted to a college if space becomes available. Colleges wait to hear if all the students they accepted decide to attend. If students don't enroll and there are empty spots, a college may fill them with students who are on the waiting list.

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-admission-glossary>

What to Know About Applying Early

If you find a college that you're sure is right for you, consider applying early. Early Decision and Early Action plans allow you to apply early (usually in November) and get an admission decision early (usually by Dec. 15).

Early Decision plans are binding

You agree to attend the college if it accepts you and offers an adequate financial aid package. You can apply to only one college for Early Decision. You may also apply to other colleges through the regular admission process, but if you're accepted by your first-choice college early, you must withdraw all other applications.

Early Action plans are nonbinding

While the college will tell you whether or not you're accepted by early January, you have the right to wait until May 1 before responding. This gives you time to compare colleges, including their financial aid offers, before making a decision. You can also apply Early Action to more than one college.

Get advice from your school counselor before applying Early Decision. While it may seem appealing to get the process over with early, it might be too soon to know that you've made the right college choice.

Single-choice Early Action is another option offered by a few colleges

This plan works the same way as other Early Action plans, but candidates may not apply early (either Early Action or Early Decision) to any other school. You can still apply for regular admission to other schools and are not required to give your final answer of acceptance until the regular decision deadline.

If you need financial aid, Early Decision might not be a good idea

You shouldn't apply under an Early Decision plan if you think you'll be better off weighing financial aid packages from several colleges later in the spring. While you can turn down an early acceptance if the college is unable to meet your need for financial aid, "need" in this context is determined by formulas, not by your family.

Not every college offers an early plan

More than 400 colleges offer an Early Decision plan, an Early Action plan, or both; but that is less than 20 percent of all colleges.

Writing Tips and Techniques for your College Essay

Pose a question the reader wants answered. This doesn't mean you should literally pose a question in your essay, but you should certainly keep the reader wondering, "How is that going to turn out?" "What does she mean by that?" "How is this all going to tie back together?" To accomplish that, begin your essay with a hook that encourages the reader to want to find out more. You might write, for example, "I sat down in the back of the crowded auditorium without a clue that I'd soon be standing center stage." This establishes a forward momentum right off the bat that makes your reader want to continue reading. Tips for essays can also be found at **Big Future**.

Don't focus exclusively on the past. Admissions look for essays where student highlights their growth and introspection, so your essay should focus on you learning and growing as a person. Don't just brag or describe. Your essay should have a moment of revelation: what did you learn from your experience? How did it make you the person you are today? Colleges don't want to read essays that are set exclusively in the past. They want students who are actively looking at their future so make sure that if you're describing a past event, you connect it to who you are now and how it will impact you as a person moving forward.

Open up. When recounting an event or experience, make sure to include how it made you feel, how it changed the way you think, and whether it had an impact on your priorities and/or values. Readers connect more when you reveal a vulnerability than when you tout a strength.

Experiment with the unexpected. If it makes sense within the context of your essay, give your story a twist or reveal something unexpected, i.e. something readers wouldn't have necessarily thought you'd do, think, or care about.

Don't summarize. Avoid explicitly stating the point of your essay. It's far less effective when you spell it out for someone. Delete every single "That's when I realized," "I learned," and "The most important lesson was..." It's unnecessary, unconvincing, and takes the reader out of the moment. Instead, let them read between the lines and interpret the meaning of your story on their own. You shouldn't have to say anything like, "And that's how I learned to stand up for myself," because the admission's officer should already know. Oftentimes when you watch a movie, an actor's expression, sigh, or closing of a door speaks louder than words. Your actions can be small, but they should be loaded with meaning, i.e. that you're taking a stand, making a decision, giving something up, or taking a risk. It can be simply deciding to get up in the morning or to smile. It just needs to represent that you've made a decision, change, or risk.

(Khan Academy: <https://www.khanacademy.org/college-careers-more/college-admissions/applying-to-college/admissions-essays/a/writing-tips-and-techniques-for-your-college-essay>)

CollegeBoard has additional helpful resources for essay writing:
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays>.

FAFSA: Why You Need It & How to Start

A WORKSHEET YOU CAN SHARE WITH YOUR PARENTS

How do I know if I should fill out the FAFSA?

Most types of college financial aid require you to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and many colleges and states require your FAFSA information to award their own grants and scholarships. Check any of the college financial aid you're interested in qualifying for:

Need-based financial aid, such as government-funded Federal, which you don't have to repay

Merit aid, such as grants and scholarships from colleges, which you don't have to repay

State-sponsored financial aid

Student loans, such as Federal Perkins and Stafford Loans, and PLUS Loans for parent borrowers

Federal and college work-study programs work-study programs (a job on campus while you attend)

If you placed a check mark next to any of these, you should definitely fill out the FAFSA.

Tip: Use the *FAFSA4caster* to estimate your eligibility for federal student aid. Simply go to fafsa4caster.ed.gov.

When should I fill out the FAFSA?

The FAFSA is available every year starting October 1st. You should start the application during your senior year as early as possible.

Why so early, you ask? The FAFSA takes time and students who file early tend to receive more grant aid. Many colleges and states have their own varying deadlines. So, don't forget to check your states deadline at fafsa.ed.gov.

What things do I need to get ready to file?

Make sure you have:

Your Social Security number

If not a U.S. citizen, alien registration number or permanent residence card

Your driver's license number

Your parents' and your tax return(s) from two years before the academic year to which you are applying for financial aid. (e.g. students who apply for financial aid for the 2017-2018 academic year will base their FAFSA on 2015 Federal Income tax returns.

Your parents' and your most recent bank statements

Your parents' most recent business and investment records

Ready to start?

You and your parent(s) must create a FSA ID at fsaid.ed.gov. Once completed, you will visit fafsa.ed.gov and click the "Start a New FAFSA" button. **Tip:** Use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to transfer income and tax data from you and your parent(s)' federal income returns into the FAFSA.

Once you enter all of your information, double-check your work and print out and keep a copy of the confirmation page for your records. After your FAFSA is filed, you can log on and check the status at any time. **Note:** Some private colleges also require the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE, found at collegeboard.com, which is a separate financial aid form.