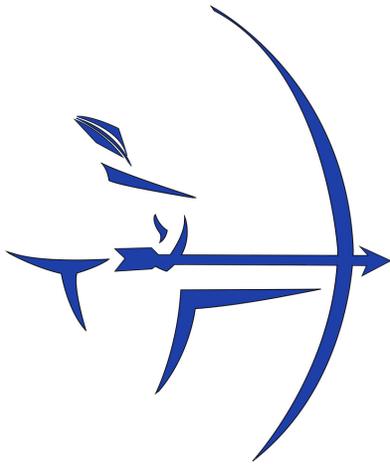


CLASS OF 2022

POST-SECONDARY PLANNING SENIOR PACKET

SHERWOOD HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT



Helping You Reach Your Target

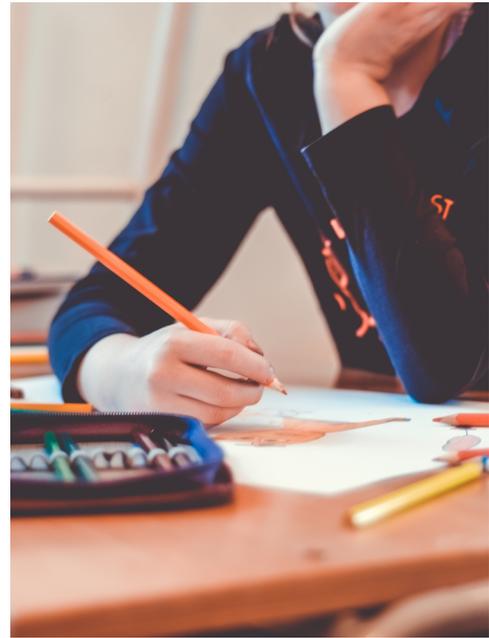
Welcome to the Sherwood Senior Packet! This document contains information to help you on your path to college and careers. This packet will be part of your guide to exploring your options and making choices about your post-secondary plans.

you are about to embark on the exciting and extensive process of exploring and applying to colleges and/or post-secondary institutions. Let us reassure you -- the Counseling Department Staff at Sherwood High School is well prepared to help you and your families move successfully through this process, as daunting as it might seem at times!



What's Inside:

After High School, What Next?
Montgomery College Programs, Majors,
Degrees & Certificates
Vocational & Trade Schools in Maryland
College Planning Timelines
Sherwood's Most Popular Applications
College Admissions Factors
SAT vs. ACT
Tips for Campus Visits
Definitions of Admission Options
Tips for Writing an Effective Essay
Financial Aid & Scholarship Info
College Application Flowchart
College Application Checklist



Check out the [Class of 2022](#)
section on the [Counseling](#)
Page of the [Sherwood](#)
Website for more
information

After High School, What Next?

High school graduates have many choices to consider when deciding what to do for the next few years of their life. Five options after high school are:

- Apprentice
- Attend postsecondary school (2-yr or 4-yr college or Trade School)
- Join the military
- Volunteer
- Work

Apprentice

An apprenticeship might be a great option for those interested in receiving supervised work experience, a classroom education, and a paycheck. An apprentice works with an experienced worker to learn a skilled trade like carpentry or plumbing. The apprentice receives training both on the job and in the classroom.

Joint employer and labor groups, individual employers, and employer associations sponsor apprenticeship programs. Apprenticeships generally last about four years, but range from one to six years. The pay that an apprentice receives increases progressively over time.

For more information, contact: <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/appr/>

Attend Post-secondary School

Many options exist for those who want to receive formal training or education past high school. Types of post-secondary schools include:

- Vocational schools
- Technical colleges
- Two-year colleges
- Four-year colleges and universities

Students can work toward earning:

- Certificates
- Diplomas
- Associates degrees
- Bachelor degrees
- Advanced degrees

Join the Military

The U.S. military has five separate services: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy. The military trains people in many occupations. Each of the military services actively recruits for both enlisted and officer positions. Every recruit signs a legal contract for eight years of duty. Usually, two to six years are spent on active duty. The rest are spent in the Reserve forces.

After basic training, enlistees will receive technical or job training. This training prepares the enlistee for a job in the military. Many military occupations involve skills that can be useful in civilian jobs. Service members receive basic pay, allowances, and benefits for serving in the military. Tuition assistance at colleges and universities is also available.

Each of the military services recruits independently and sets its own enlistment standards. However, the following general enlistment qualifications are the minimum standards set by the Department of Defense. Each service may choose to have higher standards than are listed here. Sometimes services make exceptions to these qualifications.

- U.S. citizen or an immigrant legally admitted to the U.S. for permanent residence
- 18 years old or older (or age 17 with consent of parent or legal guardian)
- High school diploma or GED
- Achieve minimum scores on the ASVAB test
- Good health and pass medical exam (minimum height, weight, and vision requirements also exist)
- Good moral standards

For more information about joining the military, contact:

Air Force

www.airforce.com

Army

www.goarmy.com

Coast Guard

www.uscg.mil

Marines

www.marines.com

Navy

www.navy.com

Gap Year / Volunteer

Volunteers gain valuable skills and meet new contacts that can help lead to future employment. Volunteer opportunities are endless but may include tutoring and mentoring kids, building homes, or responding to national disasters. A life-changing gap year experience can be the answer for a teen who asks, "What should I do after high school?" Learning a new language, volunteering in another country, earning college credit while studying abroad, and more—there are hundreds of gap year programs out there. <http://usagapyearfairs.org/programs/> or <https://blog.collegevine.com/should-you-take-a-gap-year/>

AmeriCorps is an organization where people can participate in volunteer activities while receiving a modest living allowance, health insurance, and training. Some programs even provide housing. Members can choose the type of program and the locations where they want to serve. Full-time and part-time assignments are available. After completing one year of full-time service, AmeriCorps members receive an education voucher that can be used to cover future costs of college or vocational school and pay back student loans. For more information about AmeriCorps, visit their web site at: www.americorps.org

Projects Abroad is one of the largest volunteer abroad organizations in the world. Founded in 1992, we send 10,000 people abroad each year on a variety of service projects and internships overseas. All participants receive unparalleled in-country support from our full-time, professional staff to ensure that the experience is safe, worthwhile and fun.

<https://www.projects-abroad.org/>

Work

High school graduates may decide that they want to find full-time employment and start bringing home a regular paycheck. Certain things should be done before beginning the job hunt.

1. **Discover your interests.** Reflect on past part-time jobs, volunteer work, and everyday tasks that were enjoyable.
2. **Explore job options.** Find out what types of jobs are available to high school graduates who have little or no further training.
3. **Conduct informational interviews.** Sit down and talk to someone who is currently working in a job that might be of interest.
4. **Network.** Ask friends, family, and neighbors if they have any connections to help find a job. This may be the best way to find employment, because the majority of jobs are not advertised.

With some of the initial work out of the way, it is time to start getting organized.

1. **Write a resume.** Be sure to stress education, part-time and summer jobs, clubs, and awards.
2. **Locate job openings.** Use a combination of the following resources: Local newspaper, internet, local library, employment centers, family, friends, and neighbors.
3. **Apply for a job.** This usually means submitting a cover letter, resume, and job application.
4. **Prepare for the interview.** Research the company and job before going on the interview. Also, rehearse some answers to possible interview questions.
5. **Follow-up.** Write a thank you note. This helps remind employers who you are and lets them know that you are still interested in the job.

Montgomery College Programs and Areas of Study

* Available as a fully online degree ([see all fully online degrees](#))

+ Available as a Z-Degree - no textbook purchases required ([see all Z-degrees](#))



[Accounting](#)

[American Sign Language Program](#)

[Anthropology](#)

[Applied Geography](#)

[Architectural Technology](#)

[Art](#)

[Astronomy](#)

[Automotive Technology](#)

[Bioinformatics](#)

[Biotechnology](#)

[Broadcast Media Production](#)

[Building Trades Technology](#)

[Business and Management *](#)

[Cloud Computing and Networking Technology](#)

[Communication Studies +](#)

[Computer Applications](#)

[Computer Gaming and Simulation](#)

[Computer Science and Technologies *](#)

[Construction Management](#)

[Criminal Justice *](#)

[Cybersecurity](#)

[Dance](#)

[Data Science](#)

[Diagnostic Medical Sonography](#)

[Digital Media and Web Technology](#)

[Economics](#)

[Education *](#)

[Emergency Preparedness Management](#)

[Engineering Science](#)

[English](#)

[Ethnic Social Studies](#)

[Film](#)

[Fire and Emergency Services](#)

[General Studies Program *, +](#)

[Graphic Design](#)

[Health Enhancement, Exercise Science, and Physical Education](#)

[Health Information Management](#)

[History](#)

[Homeland Security](#)

[Hospitality Management *](#)

[Interior Design](#)

[International Studies](#)

[Landscape Technology](#)

[Management](#)

[Mental Health Associate](#)

[Music](#)

[Nursing](#)

[Nutrition](#)

[Paralegal Studies](#)

[Philosophy](#)

[Photography](#)

[Physical Therapist Assistant](#)

[Political Science](#)

[Polysomnography](#)

[Psychology](#)

[Radiologic \(X-Ray\) Technology](#)

[Science](#)

[Sociology](#)

[Surgical Technology](#)

[Technical Writing](#)

[Performing Arts \(Theatre\)](#)

[Women's and Gender Studies](#)

[World Languages](#)

Professional Licensure at MC

- [Certified Professional Horticulturalist](#)
- [CISCO® Certified Network Association \(CCNA\)](#)
- [Firefighter](#)
- [Interior Design Professional](#)
- [Medical Coder](#)
- [MSDE: Child Development Associate \(CDA\)](#)
- [Nursing](#)
- [Personal Trainer Certificate](#)
- [Physical Therapist](#)
- [Certified Public Accountant](#)

COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

● Summer



- Take part in activities that continue to enhance your college and scholarship applications.
- Narrow your list of colleges (average is between 5 - 10).
- Gather application materials from colleges.
- Work on admissions essays.
- Register for ACT/SAT if still needed.

● Fall



- Create a master list or calendar that includes:
 - Tests you may still need to take.
 - College application due dates.
 - Required financial application forms and their deadlines.
 - Other materials you may need.
 - Sherwood's application processing deadlines.
 - Ask for fee waivers, if needed and if you qualify.
 - Take ACT/SAT one more time, if needed.
- Visit Colleges.
- Be sure to send your test scores to the colleges where you are applying.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and CSS/Financial Aid Profile (if needed).
- Prepare applications for any early deadlines.
- Ask teachers for recommendations (if not done already).
- Complete at least one application by Thanksgiving.
- Request your transcripts to be sent from Registrar's office (be mindful of SHS deadline).

● Winter



- Apply to any additional colleges, if needed.
- Continue to work hard and maintain grades in your senior classes.
- Begin/continue scholarship searches.
- Visit Colleges if you still need help making decisions.
- Request that your mid-year transcripts be sent to your colleges, if needed.

● Spring



- Continue to maintain your grades...finish strong. Poor grades on your final transcript might impact your admissions decisions and/or merit aid.
- Inform every college of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission and/or financial aid by May 1.
- Send your deposit to one college only.
- Take any AP exams, if applicable.
- Review your financial awards.
- Request your final transcript to be sent to the college you will be attending.

The College Application Timetable

|  Did you know? Students who visit a highly selective college campus are up to 40% more likely to be accepted to that school. | Spring of Junior Year | Summer before Senior Year | Fall of Senior Year | Winter & Spring of Senior Year & Beyond |
|--|---|------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Visit College Campuses and Attend College Fairs | ongoing | | | |
| Register & Study for SAT | 2021/2022 SAT test dates | | | |
| Register & Study for ACT | 2021/2022 ACT test dates | | | |
| Finalize College List 3 reach, 3 target, 3 likely | Use Naviance college research tools to identify colleges that are the best match & fit. | | | |
| Apply to College | Many colleges begin accepting applications starting on August 1st . **Check college admissions websites for specific deadlines** | | | |
| Request Recommendations and Transcripts | In September, use Naviance to request teacher letters of recommendation. We will review the transcript process in the fall **Talk to teacher recommenders <i>in person</i> before submitting your recommendation request in Naviance** | | | |
| Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) | | | | Submit FAFSA starting on October 1st **check college websites for more info. on financial aid deadlines** |
| Apply for Scholarships | | | | Scholarship applications can be due as early as September **Check scholarship websites for specific deadlines** |
| Commit to a College | Students must commit to a college on or before National Decision Day, May 1st | | | |

The College Application Checklist

| | | Student Checklist | Parent or Guardian Checklist |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| Spring - Summer | Visit College Campuses and Attend College Fairs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Engage with admissions reps in-person, over the phone, and through email. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Work with your student to plan spring & summer visits to the colleges they are most interested in. |
| | Register & Study for SAT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Go to www.collegeboard.org to register for the spring SAT. You can always take it again in the fall if you want a better score. <input type="checkbox"/> Come up with a study plan and stick to it! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to your student about paying for the SAT (\$50-65). Register early to avoid paying an extra \$30 late fee. <p style="text-align: center;">**fee waivers are available**</p> |
| | Register & Study for ACT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Go to www.act.org to register for the spring ACT. You can always take it again in the fall if you want a better score. <input type="checkbox"/> Come up with a study plan and stick to it! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to your student about paying for the ACT (\$52-68). Register early to avoid paying an extra \$30 late fee. <p style="text-align: center;">**fee waivers are available if you qualify**</p> |
| | Finalize College List 3 reach, 3 target, 3 likely | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Carefully consider the criteria you are looking for in a college and the admissions requirements for each school to finalize your college list and which deadlines you want to shoot for. <p>**Use Naviance & college websites to help you make informed decisions about where to apply.**</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to your student about where they are planning to apply and what criteria matters to them most. |

The College Application Checklist



Did you know? You are twice as likely to get into a college if you apply for Early Action rather than Regular Decision.

| | | Student Checklist | Parent or Guardian Checklist |
|---------------|--|---|--|
| Fall - Winter | Apply to College | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to college admissions websites for more information on how to apply. Most applications are available beginning August 1st. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to your student about how to pay for college application fees. Fees can range from \$25 to \$90 per application. <i>**fee waivers are available if you qualify**</i> |
| | Request Recommendations and Transcripts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak to teachers directly to find out what they require in order to provide you with a written recommendation Counselors will review the SHS Transcript/Letter of Recommendation Request Process with seniors in September. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure your student is following the guidelines for the SHS Transcript and Recommendation Request Process AND Timeline |
| | Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go to https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid to learn more about the FAFSA. Submit your FAFSA application as early as October 1st. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents and guardians should go to https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out to identify what financial information is needed to complete the FAFSA successfully. |
| | Apply for Scholarships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use resources like the Naviance Scholarship Search to find out which scholarships you're eligible for. Apply well in advance of scholarship deadlines. Check emails from the Career Center (Mr. Hock) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss finances with your student. Let them know if there is a "financial gap" between the costs of college that would not be met by household contributions + federal financial aid. How much will the student need from other sources in order to attend college? |
| | Commit to a College | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> College Decision Day is May 1st but many colleges would like you to commit earlier! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to your student about each college they are accepted to. Is it a good fit for them? Academically? Culturally? Financially? Help them make their final decision. |



College: How to Get There From Here

We know you're ready for college—your academic track record has proven that. Now it's time to apply. Here are some tips on how to get started.

Apply to four or more colleges.

AT LEAST
1
SAFETY

A college you're confident you can get into.

AT LEAST
2
GOOD FITS

Colleges you have a pretty good chance of getting into.

AT LEAST
1
REACH

A college that you have a chance of getting into, but it's a stretch.

Applying to two colleges instead of one makes it **40% MORE LIKELY** that you'll enroll in a four-year college. If you apply to more than two, then your chances of enrolling will be even better.

Never rule out applying to a college because you think it's too expensive.

There are scholarships and financial aid packages available at almost all four-year colleges.

The estimated average grant aid for four-year colleges in 2016-17
PUBLIC COLLEGES

MORE THAN \$4,700

PRIVATE NONPROFIT COLLEGES

MORE THAN \$18,600

Many students receive much more than the average aid.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opens October 1.

When looking at colleges, consider the following:

ACADEMIC

What are the average SAT® scores and GPA of students admitted to the school? Does it have any prerequisites? Apply to colleges that are a good academic fit—whether they're a safe bet or a little out of reach.

GRADUATION RATE

Do most students graduate in four years? If not, why not?

LOCATION

Do you prefer a big city, suburb, or small town?

MAJORS

Does the college offer a variety of majors that interest you?

SIZE

Do you want a smaller campus with smaller class sizes or a larger school with a wider variety of programs, such as a state university?

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Does the college's library meet your needs? Does the campus use the latest technology? What about lab facilities?

CAMPUS LIFE AND SERVICES

What are the housing options? Are there social activities, cultural events, clubs, or athletics that interest you? What support services are available on campus to help with social, health, academic, and financial challenges?

Take a college tour.

Set up campus visits. These visits are always free, but if you can't travel, take a virtual tour, or visit a local college. Even if you don't tour your first-choice college, you'll get an idea of what campus life is really like.

College Application Timeline

Want to know if you're on track in the college application process? This timeline shows you what you should be doing, and when.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER—PREPARE

- Sign up for updates at bigfuture.org** and opt in to the College Board Opportunity Scholarships at cb.org/opportunity if you haven't already.
- Talk to your school counselor or adviser** about the college search and application process.
- College requirements:** Make a list of the application, testing, and financial aid requirements for each college.
- Letters of recommendation:** Decide who to ask, and reach out to them early so they have time to write good letters. If you have a résumé or list of accomplishments, be sure to send it to them.
- Application essays:** Look over essays you have already written for inspiration. Share your ideas with parents, teachers, or other trusted adults so they can help you craft the strongest essays possible.
- Register for the SAT:** If you haven't taken it yet, or would like to take it again, it's not too late! Sign up now, and be sure to send score reports to colleges.
- Practice and improve your SAT score:** When you practice for the SAT for 12 hours using Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy and improve your score by 100+ points, you could be eligible for a College Board Opportunity Scholarship. Visit cb.org/opportunity.
- Opt in to Student Search Service®:** More than 1,100 colleges use this service and are looking for students like you.
- Complete the FAFSA, which opens October 1:** It's necessary if you're applying for federal and state grants and loans. Funds are limited, so make sure to file by the financial aid priority filing dates. You could also earn a chance at a College Board Opportunity Scholarship.
- Reminder:** Enter the Complete the FAFSA scholarship at cb.org/opportunity.
- Complete the CSS Profile™, which also opens October 1:** Certain colleges use it to see if you qualify for additional grants and scholarships. (There's a fee for application.)

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER—APPLY TO COLLEGES

- Work on your applications:** Some have deadlines as early as November.
- Send your SAT and AP® scores:** This ensures that colleges have the most complete set of your information to review for admission, as well as scholarship awards, course placement, or selection to a specific program or major.
- Consider college application services:** Application systems like the Coalition Application, Common Application, and Universal College Application let you complete one application online and submit it to several colleges.
- Apply to college:** Submit your applications to colleges you're interested in attending, and you could earn a chance at a College Board Opportunity Scholarship. Visit cb.org/opportunity.
- Send transcripts:** Ask for your transcripts to be sent to your chosen colleges.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY—EXPLORE FINANCIAL AID OPTIONS

- Compare award letters:** After examining the financial aid packages you're offered, you'll see that schools may be more affordable than you thought.
- Search for scholarships:** Scholarships provide money for college that you don't need to repay. And they're not just for academic superstars.

MARCH/APRIL—DECIDE!

- Get information:** Dig a little deeper to help you make the best choice. Ask questions. Create a list of any questions you still have about the colleges you're considering.
- Review acceptance letters:** Go over all offers of admission, consider the pros and cons of each school, and pick the college that's the best fit for you.

Visit bigfuture.org for more information.

SHERWOOD'S MOST POPULAR APPLICATIONS

| Name of School | Average WGPA | | Average SAT | | Average ACT | | % Accepted | |
|---|--------------|-------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------|------------|-------|
| | SHS | Natl* | SHS | Natl*§ | SHS | Natl*§ | SHS | Natl* |
| University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) | 4.3 | 4.22 | 1322 | 1210-1420 | 28 | 30-34 | 63% | 44.9% |
| Towson University | 3.8 | 3.62 | 1159 | 1000-1170 | 24 | 21-25 | 80% | 73.4% |
| Montgomery College | 3.02 | N/A | 973 | N/A | 19 | N/A | 100% | N/A |
| University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) | 4.1 | 3.73 | 1251 | 1110-1310 | 26 | 24-29 | 76% | 59.4% |
| Salisbury University | 3.7 | 3.69 | 1106 | 1090-1210 | 23 | 21-25 | 77% | 60.6% |
| Pennsylvania State University | 4.1 | 3.6 | 1250 | 1090-1300 | 26 | 25-29 | 90% | 51.3% |
| University of Delaware | 4.2 | 3.7 | 1244 | 1090-1300 | 27 | 24-29 | 76% | 66.6% |
| James Madison University | 4.1 | N/A | 1207 | 1040-1220 | 25 | 24-30 | 80% | 72.6% |
| Virginia Tech. | 4.3 | N/A | 1308 | 1100-1320 | 27 | N/A | 77% | 73.4% |
| West Virginia University | 3.4 | 3.42 | 1119 | 930-1140 | 22 | 21-27 | 86% | 85.8% |
| University of South Carolina | 4.0 | 4.04 | 1261 | 1110-12-90 | 26 | 25-30 | 72% | 64.5% |
| Frostburg State University | 3.5 | 3.18 | 1086 | 860-1060 | 21 | 17-22 | 80% | 63.5% |
| University of Pittsburgh | 4.3 | 4.0 | 1292 | 1180-1350 | 28 | 26-31 | 84% | 53.9% |
| University of Virginia | 4.6 | 4.23 | 1413 | 1250-1460 | 31 | 29-33 | 24% | 29.8% |
| Mount Saint Mary's University | 3.6 | 3.3 | 1058 | 910-1130 | 21 | 18-24 | 89% | 67.2% |
| Johns Hopkins University | 4.7 | 3.9 | 1310 | 1360-1530 | 32 | 32-34 | 12% | 14.1% |
| University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | 4.3 | 4.63 | 1343 | 1220-1430 | 30 | 28-33 | 23% | 30.5% |
| East Carolina University | 3.6 | 3.76 | 1112 | 980-1130 | 22 | 21-24 | 73% | 69% |
| George Mason University | 4.0 | 3.66 | 1239 | 1040-1250 | 25 | 23-29 | 81% | 79.7% |
| Clemson University | 4.2 | N/A | 1337 | 1150-1350 | 28 | 27-31 | 53% | 51.3% |

* National Data pulled from The Educational Trust (edtrust.org)

§ Middle 50th percentile



College Entrance Factors

When colleges are evaluating a student's application, they take many factors into consideration. However, they weigh some factors more heavily than others.

According to NACAC (National Association of College Admissions Counseling), this is how colleges across the country rank the components of a college application:

These 4 components have consistently been the top admission decision factors:

- Grades in College Prep/Core Courses
- Strength of Curriculum
- Grades in all courses
- Test Scores (SAT/ACT)

Next, colleges focus on the following components, and these components are considered moderately important and looked at very similarly:

- Student Essay
- Counselor Recommendation
- Teacher Recommendation
- Demonstrated interest in the college (ie: college visits, visits with admissions representatives in your area)
- Extracurricular Activities
- Class Rank

These components of the application are factored in, but only by the subset of colleges that require them:

- Portfolio
- Interview

SAT and ACT Conversion Chart

| SAT Composite Score (Math, CR & W) | ACT Composite Score | SAT Composite Score (Math & CR only) |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 2400 | 36 | 1600 |
| 2340-2390 | 35 | 1540-1590 |
| 2280-2330 | 34 | 1490-1530 |
| 2220-2270 | 33 | 1440-1480 |
| 2160-2210 | 32 | 1400-1430 |
| 2100-2150 | 31 | 1360-1390 |
| 2040-2090 | 30 | 1330-1350 |
| 1980-2030 | 29 | 1290-1320 |
| 1920-1970 | 28 | 1250-1280 |
| 1860-1910 | 27 | 1210-1240 |
| 1800-1850 | 26 | 1170-1200 |
| 1740-1790 | 25 | 1130-1160 |
| 1680-1730 | 24 | 1090-1120 |
| 1620-1670 | 23 | 1050-1080 |
| 1560-1610 | 22 | 1020-1040 |
| 1500-1550 | 21 | 980-1010 |
| 1440-1490 | 20 | 940-970 |
| 1380-1430 | 19 | 900-930 |
| 1320-1370 | 18 | 860-890 |
| 1260-1310 | 17 | 820-850 |
| 1200-1250 | 16 | 770-810 |
| 1140-1190 | 15 | 720-760 |
| 1080-1130 | 14 | 670-710 |
| 1020-1070 | 13 | 620-660 |
| 960-1010 | 12 | 560-610 |
| 900-950 | 11 | 510-550 |

SAT vs. ACT

SAT or ACT? Do you know which test is right for you?

Colleges accept both test equally, so the choice is up to you! Here's what you need to know to compare the exams.

| | SAT | ACT |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Why Take It | Colleges use SAT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships | Colleges use ACT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships |
| Test Structure | 3 tests Math Reading Writing and Language Essay (Optional) | 4 tests: Math Reading English Science Essay (Optional) |
| Length | 3 hours (without essay) 3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay) | 2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay) 3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay) |
| Reading | 5 reading passages | 4 reading passages |
| Science | None | 1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge) |
| Math | Covers Arithmetic, Algebra I & II, Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis | Covers Arithmetic, Algebra I & II, Geometry and Trigonometry |
| Tools | Some math questions don't allow you to use a calculator | You can use a calculator on all math questions |
| Essays | Optional. The essay will test your comprehension of a source text | Optional. The essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues. |
| How It's Scored | Scored on a scale of 400–1600 | Scored on a scale of 1–36 |



Campus Visit Checklist

Visiting a college campus helps you get a sense of what a college — and life at that college — is like. This can help you decide whether the college is right for you.

GATHER INFORMATION

Find out what you need to do to apply, and see if the college's class and major offerings are what you want:

- Take part in a group information session at the admission office.
- Interview with an admission officer.
- Pick up financial aid forms.
- Sit in on a class that interests you. If classes aren't in session, just see what the classrooms are like.
- Meet a professor who teaches a subject that interests you.
- Talk to students about what they think of their classes and professors.
- Get the names and business cards of the people you meet so you can contact them later if you have questions.

EXPLORE THE CAMPUS

Get a feel for student life, and see if this college is a place where you will do well:

- Take a campus tour.
- Visit the dining hall, fitness center, library, career center, bookstore, and other campus facilities.
- Talk to current students about the college and life on campus.
- Check out the freshman dorms, and stay overnight with a student, if possible.
- Talk to the coaches of sports that you may want to play.
- Walk or drive around the community surrounding the campus.

CHECK OUT CAMPUS MEDIA

Tune in to learn what's happening on campus and what's on students' minds:

- Listen to the college radio station.
- Read the student newspaper.
- Scan bulletin boards to see what daily student life is like.
- Go to the career center and learn what services it offers.
- Browse the school's website and any campus blogs.
- Read other student publications, such as department newsletters, alternative newspapers, and literary reviews.

GET THE MOST OUT OF A CAMPUS VISIT IN **6 STEPS**

1 DECIDE WHERE AND HOW

See if your school arranges group trips to colleges or if you could get a group of friends together and visit the campus. A family trip is another option and allows you to involve your family in the process.

2 PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT

Before you set out, get a map of the college campus and pick out places of interest. Call the college's admission office to schedule a guided tour of the campus.

3 TAKE YOUR OWN TOUR

Just wandering around the campus on your own or with friends can be the best way to get a feel for what a college is like.

4 EXPLORE THE FACILITIES

Find the spots on campus where students gather or ask a student where the best place to eat is to get a feel for the character of the college. Visit the library and check out the gym or theater. Ask an admission officer if you can tour a dorm and a classroom.

5 MAKE CONNECTIONS

Talk to current students. Ask the students at the next table or sitting nearby what they like best about the college.

6 TAKE NOTES

During your visit, write down some notes about your experience. What did you see that excited you? Are there aspects of the college that you don't like? If so, what are they?

Questions to Ask During Your Visit:

ASK TOUR GUIDES/STUDENTS

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- What's it like to go from high school to college?
- What do you do in your free time? On the weekends?
- What do you love about this college?
- What do you wish you could change about this college?
- Why did you choose this college?
- What is it like to live here?
- What does the college do to promote student involvement in campus groups, extracurricular activities, or volunteerism?

ASK PROFESSORS

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- Can a student be mentored by professors, graduate students, or upperclassmen?
- How are professors rated by the college? Does the college think mentoring and meetings for project guidance are important?
- How does the college help students have access to professors outside class? Do professors join students for lunch, help with community service groups, or guide student organizations?
- How many students do research or other kinds of projects for a semester or more?

ASK THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

- How much has your total college cost for each student risen in the past year?
- How much do your students usually end up owing when they graduate?
- What is the average income of graduates who had the same major that interests me?
- Will my costs go up when your tuition goes up, or can we use the same tuition rate I started with so I'll know the costs for four years?
- How many students usually graduate in the major that interests me? How long do these students usually take to get their degree? In what ways does the college help students graduate in four years?

DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST SUITS YOU?

Regular Decision

DEFINITION:

Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Rolling Admission

DEFINITION:

Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Early Action (EA)

DEFINITION:

Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Early Decision (ED)

DEFINITION:

Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll and withdraw all other applications. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.

COMMITMENT:

BINDING

Restrictive Early Action (REA)

DEFINITION:

Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.

Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions.

Tips for Writing an Effective Application Essay

Adapted from [BigFuture](#)

The college essay is your chance to use your voice to add to your college application. Many colleges require the essay as a way to hear from the student directly and to get a sense of who you are in your own words. It's a great opportunity to personalize your application beyond the grades, scores, and other information you've provided and can make a difference at decision time. Here are some tips to keep in mind when you're writing.

1. **Don't jump on the bandwagon.**

Don't try to guess what you think they want to read. Your essay will be easier to write—and more exciting to read—if you are genuinely passionate about your subject. For example: If all your friends are writing application essays about covid-19, that may be a good reason why you should avoid it. (Unless, of course, you've had a vivid, life-changing experience that you are burning to share.)

2. **Remember, it's all about you.**

Essay prompts are designed to give you a lot of latitude, but they expect you to focus on a subject that is personal and particular to you. Admissions counselors say that the best essays help them learn something about the candidate that they would never know from reading the rest of the application.

3. **Sound like yourself.**

Don't use words you wouldn't normally use. Don't use fancy language that you wouldn't use in real life. (Imagine yourself reading this essay out loud to a classroom full of people who have never met you.) Keep a confident tone even if—especially if—you're not feeling that way. Be on the lookout for word and phrases like “maybe,” “sort of,” “I think” or anything else that undercuts that tone.

4. **Give yourself time.**

Few people write well under pressure, so try to do your first draft a few weeks before you have to turn it in. You don't have to work on your essay every single day, but you will want to give yourself time to revise and edit. You may discover that you want to change your topic. Just get that first draft going—the sooner, the better.

5. **Be specific. Be factual.**

Capitalize on real-life experiences. This essay may give you the time and space to explain why a particular achievement meant so much to you. But resist the urge to exaggerate and embellish: admissions counselors read thousands of essays each year—they can spot a fake.

6. **Stick to the length suggested.**

On the Common App, essays have a 650-word maximum. So your application will stand out—not in a good way—if you turn in 250 words. Likewise, if you're applying to a school with a “suggested limit” of 500 words, don't go way over that (no matter how thrilling you think that 10,000-word story of your life might be). No suggested length? When in doubt, borrow the Common App's 650-word limit. And, if you're asked for supplemental essays, remember that they are usually expected to be shorter. (Whew!)

7. **Proofread, proofread, then proofread again.**

When you think you're done with that final draft, run it through the spellcheck on your computer, then do not read your essay for a few days. When you read it again with a cold eye, you'll be more apt to spot typos and awkward grammar. After that, ask a teacher, parent, or college student to give it a quick read. (And, while you're at it, doublecheck your word count too.)

The Cost of College

DO YOU KNOW?

- College costs money, but not all colleges cost the same.
- Because of financial aid, the true cost of college for most students is less than the published price of the colleges they attend.
- The U.S. government helps more than 14 million students pay for college every year.

FAST FACTS ABOUT FINANCIAL AID

What Is Financial Aid?

The U.S. government, state governments, and colleges work together to provide financial help to those students who need it. That help is called *financial aid*.

Who Gets Financial Aid?

Most college students get some financial aid, but they all don't get the same amount. How much a student receives depends on his or her circumstances.

How Do You Get Financial Aid?

Financial aid is not automatic — students apply for financial aid by filling out forms. Colleges will usually send students the necessary forms.

What Forms Are Required?

The most important form is the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid**, most often called the **FAFSA**, which students complete in their senior year of high school. Students and their families will find information and resources about college money matters at **fafsa.gov**. When looking up FAFSA on the Internet, be sure you are on the correct website; it looks like this:



Remember! Financial aid is not just for students who don't have much money, and it's not just for geniuses either. It is important not to count yourself out.

Every student should apply for financial aid.

The application timeline for U.S. government financial aid is during your senior year.

WHAT TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID ARE AVAILABLE?

There are three basic types of U.S. government financial aid available: money that is given to you; money that is loaned to you; and money that you work for.

1. A **grant** is money given to help pay for college. A grant does *not* have to be paid back. Grants are often awarded on the basis of financial need, which is how much help a family needs to pay for college. (A grant is money that is given to you.)
2. A **student loan** is money given to help pay for college, EXCEPT you will have to pay the money back. These loans have lower interest rates than other loans, and you don't have to start paying the money back until after you finish college. (A student loan is money that is loaned to you.)
3. **Work-study** is the third type of aid. Work-study requires you to work part time — about 10–20 hours per week — on or close to campus. You might work in the college library, bookstore, or computer lab. The money you earn goes toward your school expenses. (Work-study is money that you work for.)

What About Scholarships?

A **scholarship** is like a grant. You do not have to pay the money back. You may, however, have to earn a scholarship based on some type of achievement or characteristic. Students earn scholarships for good grades, athletic, artistic, musical, or dramatic talents, special interests, gender, ethnicity, as well as other criteria.

Scholarships require separate forms. Your high school counselor will be the best resource for information about scholarships. Many scholarships require that you have completed and filed the FAFSA.

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW TO PREPARE FOR THE COSTS OF COLLEGE?

Begin to save. Even saving a little from small jobs or cash gifts will contribute toward accomplishing your future goals. Paying for college is often a family project. Talk to your family about your educational goals.

Learn about the different costs of attending college.

- **Tuition** is the cost of your academic classes. This is the cost that varies the most among colleges and universities.
- **Room and board** covers the cost of a place to live (room) and meals (board). If you decide to live at home, this cost will be less.
- **Transportation** is the cost of traveling from your home to your college. This cost also varies.
- **Other expenses** include books, personal spending money, additional fees, and living expenses.

Make an appointment with your school counselor to learn more about the costs of college. An adult member of your family may wish to attend that meeting with you.

Also attend **school-sponsored** meetings about financial aid. Most high schools and most colleges and universities offer information presentations that are **FREE** and **open to the public**.

Don't forget to continue doing your very best in school!

Important!

In order to qualify for grants, student loans, or work-study, you must complete the FAFSA.



Financial Aid Primer

The U.S. Government's Formula for Federal Financial Aid Is:

COA minus EFC equals Need

COA = COST OF ATTENDANCE

Cost of attendance includes tuition, fees, room and board, transportation, and other expenses.

- **Tuition** is the cost of your academic classes at college, and the cost that varies most among different types of colleges.
- **Fees** are smaller costs that colleges charge for general expenses such as student activities, Internet services, or use of laboratories.
- **Room and board** (if you choose to live away from your home while you attend college) is the cost of a place to live (room) and your meals (board). After tuition, room and board is the next most expensive of college costs.
- **Transportation** is the cost of traveling to and from your home. If you go away for college, transportation costs will include plane, bus, train, or car expenses. If you commute from your home every day, this is the cost of getting to class and back home every day.
- Other cost of attendance expenses include books, living expenses, and spending money. Living expenses include cell phone charges, laundry, and necessary groceries. Spending money can be used to go out with your friends.

EFC = ESTIMATED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION

The Estimated Family Contribution is the amount students and their families are expected to pay toward college costs each year; this amount reflects an analysis of your family's overall financial circumstances. The information used to determine EFC is based on a student and their family completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and is the most important form to complete as a student prepares for the costs of college. Students complete the FAFSA in their high school senior year.

NEED = DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COA AND EFC

Need is the difference between the cost of attendance and the Estimated Family Contribution. The largest source of need-based financial aid is the federal government, but colleges, states, and private organizations also can award need-based aid to students.

Remember:
Financial aid is available.

The key to managing the cost of college is to complete the FAFSA!

COLLEGE COST VOCABULARY

Aid: Money awarded to students to help them pay for college. Financial aid can come in the form of gifts (scholarships and grants) and self-help aid (loans and work-study opportunities).

Room and Board: Combined cost of housing and meals for students who live on campus and/or eat in college-operated dining halls.

COA: Total cost of attendance at a college includes tuition, room and board, fees, transportation, and other expenses. COA is not the same for every college.

EFC: Expected Family Contribution is the total amount students and their families are expected to pay toward college costs from their income and assets for one academic year.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid is the form completed by all students to apply for federal student aid. Students complete a FAFSA each year they are in college.

Grant: Financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid and is usually awarded on the basis of financial need.

Loan: The money that a student borrows and has to pay back.

Merit: Aid most often awarded as a scholarship. Merit aid (scholarships) is usually based on need, academic achievement, or other qualifications (i.e., musical talent, athletic talent, gender, ethnicity).

Need: Difference between the total cost of attending a college (COA) and a student's expected family contribution (EFC). Financial aid grants, loans, and work-study will be offered by each college to fill all or a portion of the student's need.

PROFILE: Besides the FAFSA, students may be asked by a college to complete additional paperwork. Colleges want to understand the financial needs of each student and how they can help a student with college costs. The CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE[®] is another form that students may be requested to complete. Unlike the FAFSA, however, not every student will complete the PROFILE. The FAFSA remains the most important form for students to complete.

Senior: The senior year in high school is when students complete the FAFSA.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. **COA** means _____.
2. Name three items that are included in the **COA**:

3. **EFC** means _____.
** Note: Student and family information on income tax forms will be used in calculating the EFC.*
4. **Need** is determined by taking the difference between the _____ and the _____.
5. When do students and families complete the **FAFSA**? _____

Begin planning for your college future at:

www.professionals.collegeboard.com/guidance/financial-aid/applications/fafsa

Scholarship and Financial Aid information

Sherwood High School

Sources of Financial Aid

- Federal Financial Aid
- State Financial Aid
- Institutional Financial Aid (from the college)
- Private Sources of Financial Aid



Types of Financial Aid

- Scholarships
- Grants
- Employment
- Loans

Some Websites for Scholarship & Financial Aid Information

- Naviance
- [Maryland Higher Education Commission](#)
- [Collegeboard](#)
- [Fastweb](#)
- [FAFSA](#)
- [FAFSA4Caster](#) (estimate FAFSA results)
- [MyScholly](#)
- [SallieMae](#)
- [GoingMerry](#)
- [Raise.me](#)

MARYLAND GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS

What is MDCAPS?

What is the Maryland College Aid Processing System (MDCAPS)?

MDCAPS is MHEC's comprehensive financial aid system that allows us to process State scholarship applications and allocate funds more efficiently using today's technology. To use MDCAPS, you must first create a student login profile. The profile creation process will request an email address. An activation link will be sent to the email address provided. To get started with a profile, click the MDCAPS logo or use this link, <https://mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us>. Next, click "Create a Student Login" located below the yellow [Login] button.

If you are having trouble creating an MDCAPS profile and logging in, please review our instructions here:  [Help Creating a Student Login for MDCAPS](#).

What features does MDCAPS offer?

- Apply On-Line for certain scholarship programs
- Check your To Do List
- Check your Application Status
- See if MHEC has received your FAFSA
- Accept or Decline Awards
- Check Award and Payment Status
- Transfer and Add Schools
- Change Enrollment Status
- Change Housing Status
- Send Help Requests to MHEC staff
- Update Your Contact Information and more!

For questions about your financial aid application or award, please log into MD CAPS at <https://mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us> and send us an email through your secure account. On the homepage, click on the "Email Us" button at the top of the page. Check your "Inbox" on the homepage for a response from our staff.

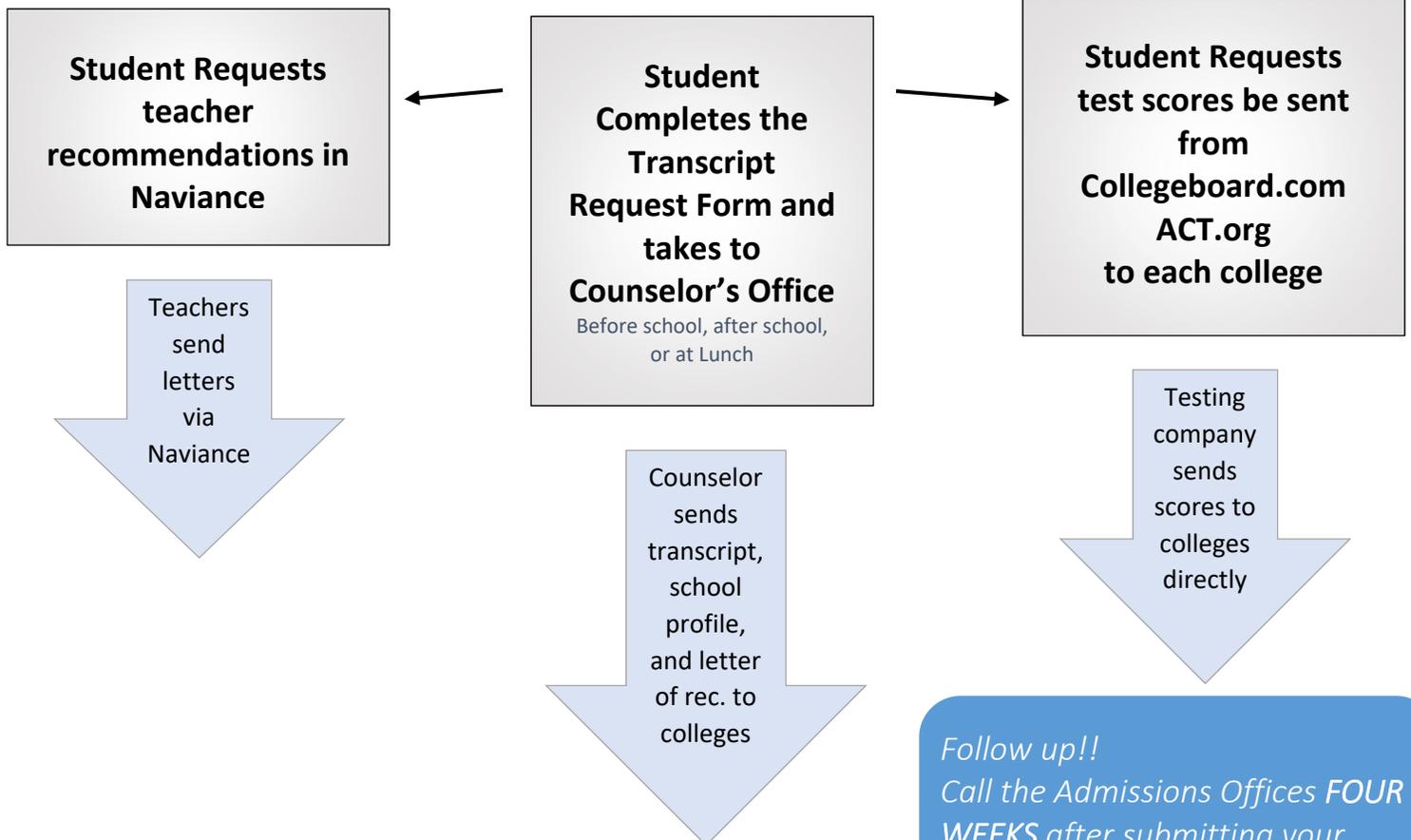
For problems logging into your MDCAPS account, **first** review the [MD CAPS Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) page. It is also located on the MDCAPS homepage at <https://mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us>. If you still cannot log in to your account, please email OSFA at osfemail.mhec@maryland.gov.

Things to do before you start your applications:

- Complete Student Brag Sheet, Parent Brag Sheet, and Resume in Naviance
- In Naviance: Under Colleges tab, Click on “Colleges I’m Thinking About” and +Add Colleges
 - Create an account with each college you plan on applying to
 - Check to see if colleges participate with Common App or the Coalition
 - Create Common App or Coalition Account if planning to use these to apply
- Speak with teachers and ask them if they would be willing to write a letter of rec.

Student Completes College Application

*Requests for transcripts, letters of recommendations, and test scores must be done
at least 3 WEEKS BEFORE the college deadline*



*Follow up!!
Call the Admissions Offices **FOUR WEEKS** after submitting your application to make sure all documentation has been received.*



College Application Checklist

| | Task | Timeframe | Where |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Complete the Student Brag Sheet <i>The information in this survey will help your counselor and teachers write a more personalized letter of recommendation for you.</i> <i>About Me > My Surveys > Surveys Not Started (for the first time)</i></p> | Summer 2021 |  NAVIANCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Your parent(s) complete the Parent Brag Sheet <i>This information provides your counselor with additional information that may assist in writing your letter of recommendation.</i> <i>About Me > My Surveys > Surveys Not Started (for the first time)</i></p> | Summer 2021 |  NAVIANCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Add Colleges to the “Colleges I Am Thinking About” List <i>Log onto your Naviance account and add colleges to “Colleges I am Thinking About”</i></p> | Ongoing |  NAVIANCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Request Teacher Letters of Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that you have a face-to-face conversation with teachers (if possible) before the end of the school year to ask if they would be willing to write you a letter of recommendation. Follow up with the teacher in the fall. • Letters will be sent through Naviance, and you MUST add the teacher to your Naviance account. Don't forget to write a thank you note for each teacher who writes a letter of recommendation for you. | Spring 2021 Ongoing |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Request Teacher Letters of Recommendations in Naviance <i>Click on the Colleges tab and then on “Letters of Recommendation”. Click the “Add Requests” button. Select the teacher you would like to write a recommendation for each college from the drop down menu. Repeat for additional teachers. Click the Save button.</i></p> | Fall 2021 |  NAVIANCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>If you are applying to colleges using the Common Application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sure to complete the Education section (including the FERPA) in your Common App account before matching your Common App and Naviance Accounts. • Remember to add the colleges you are applying to via Common App to your Common App account. | Prior to requesting transcripts |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Request your SAT or ACT scores be sent to your colleges <i>Colleges want your SAT and ACT scores sent directly from ACT or the College Board. Log onto your account at www.actstudent.org or www.collegeboard.org and follow the instructions to have your scores sent to your list of colleges. SAT Scores can now be requested and sent through the Coalition Application as well.</i></p> | Prior to requesting transcripts |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Complete the Transcript Request Form and submit to your counselor</p> | 3 weeks (or more) BEFORE your college deadline |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Submit your Applications by the deadline posted by the college <i>Be sure to know the deadline for your application type (Early Decision, Early Action, Priority, Regular, Rolling)</i></p> | Varies | Deadline posted on College Website(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>If you are planning to play a sport in college, register with the NCAA Eligibility Center <i>Go to www.eligibilitycenter.org and click on “New Account” in the upper right hand corner. Once you create an account, you must request an official transcript from the school by adding NCAA to the YELLOW Transcript Request Form. Official SAT/ACT scores may need to be sent to the NCAA.</i></p> | Summer 2021 |  |

| | Task | Timeframe | Where |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Complete the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) <i>Go to fafsa.ed.org. Complete the form as early as possible after Oct 1. Money is often awarded on a first come, first served basis. This application is FREE.</i></p> <p><i>Be sure to create a MDCAPS Account as well in order to maximize your aid.</i> https://mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us/MDCAPS/</p> | <p>Can begin on October 1, 2021 Recommended to complete by March 1, 2022</p> | <p>Fafsa.ed.gov mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us/MDCAPS/</p> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>If applicable, complete the CSS Profile <i>The CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE is an application distributed by the College Board allowing students to apply for financial aid. Approximately 300 colleges use this application.</i></p> | <p>At least two weeks before the earliest college or scholarship priority application deadline</p> | <p>www.collegeboard.org</p> |
| | <p>If needed, request Mid-Year transcripts be sent to schools that require them through the registrar</p> | <p>Mid-February 2022</p> | <p>Registrar's Office</p> |
| | | | |