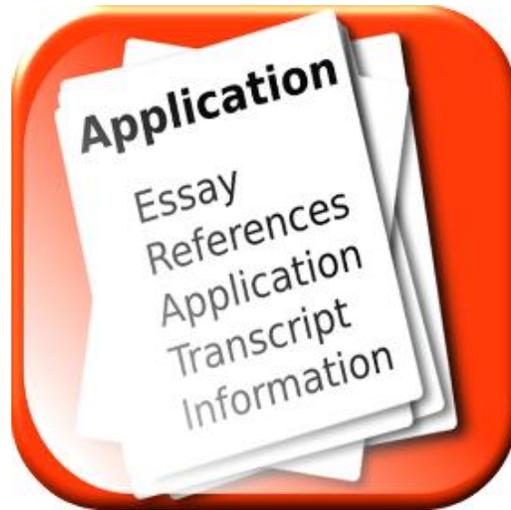


College Admissions Resource Handbook



Wicomico High School

For your Application Information:

Amy Rhodes (A-G)
arhodes@wcboe.org

Ashley Gosseline (H-O)
agosseli@wcboe.org

Leroy Satchell (P-Z)
lsatchel@wcboe.org

Chris Render (9th grade)
jrender@wcboe.org

410-677-5146
CEEB Code: 210935

Welcome to the Wicomico High School College Resource Handbook

Wicomico High School

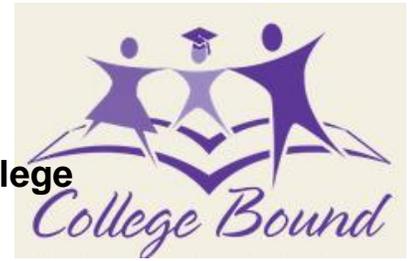
This handbook is a resource as you begin the process of planning and exploring college choices. Should you attend a technical school, 4-year school, community college or pursue an apprenticeship? There are many options to choose from. Post high school education is not a one size fits all experience! Your job is to choose the path that is right for YOU!

This is your process! Don't get caught up in what everyone else plans to do, or the media frenzy surrounding the college admissions process. Be cautious about college rankings – they oversimplify and mislead! In this handbook we've included ideas to help you get focused and to discover what is important to you.

It is never too early to begin your search. Exploring different options through websites is one way to begin. As a junior, you should put together a list of choices and begin visiting campuses. Your list should include one or two safety schools – schools you could apply and be accepted to, one or two reach schools – a reach school you love to go to, but are not sure you would be accepted to, and one or two likely schools that seem to be a natural fit. **In most cases your “final” list should consist of four to six schools.**

Browse through this handbook for information regarding testing (SAT vs. ACT), applications, essay writing, scholarships, financial aid and much more.

Factors to consider when choosing a college



ACADEMICS

- What is the average class size? Largest? Smallest?
- How many students in last year's freshman class returned for their sophomore year?
- What was the grade point average for the freshman class last year?
- What is the college's procedure for student orientation and scheduling?
- How much reading, writing, class participation is expected?
- How is a faculty advisor assigned to students?
- What service does the school offer for the student who is undecided about a major?
- How many students complete a degree? In what majors?
- Are students taught by full time faculty members, graduate assistants, or a combination of both?
- What types of additional services are provided by the school at no additional cost to the student (e.g. tutoring, career and personal counseling, developmental reading and study skills workshops, job placement)?
- Is there an honors program? What are the qualifications for entry?
- What is the average number of years it takes for students to graduate?
- What is the process for declaring/being accepted into a major?
- What is the profile of those accepted into their major vs. another college?

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- What high school courses are required?
- Are entrance tests required? Which ones? What scores are acceptable?
- Is a certain grade point average required?
- Will my activities and school involvement be considered?
- Is there an essay to apply?
- Are there personal interviews or letters of recommendation required?
- Do certain majors have special requirements?
- What percent of applicants are accepted?
- When are applications due?
- What is the school's early action/early decision and deferment policies?

COLLEGE CHARACTERISTICS

- Where is the college located (city, suburb, small town, rural setting)?
- What is the surrounding community like?
- Is the college public, private, church affiliated?
- What is the current student enrollment?
- What special or unique programs are offered?
- Does the college have general education or course distribution requirements?
- What is the academic calendar (semesters, quarters)?
- What is the extent of their accommodations for students with disabilities?

COST

- What is the cost of attendance? Tuition, room and board? Other fees? Use the *Net Price Calculator* on each college's website.
- How much did costs increase from last year to this year?
- Is there a difference in the costs for in-state and out-of-state students?
- Are accepted students required to place deposits for tuition and housing? Are these refundable?

FINANCIAL AID

- What percent of students receive need-based financial aid?
- What percent of students receive scholarships based on academic ability (merit money)?
- What would be a typical financial aid package for a freshman?
- What percent of those who apply for financial aid receive it?
- Will my financial aid be adjusted if my need increases?
- What are the financial aid application procedures and deadlines?
- When are financial aid applicants notified of their awards?
- How long do they have to respond? Is there a tuition payment plan?
- Are there campus jobs available? Are there off campus jobs as well?
- How do I find out if I qualify for the work/study program?

SOCIAL LIFE

- What is the average age of the student body?
- What is the male to female ratio?
- What percent of students reside on campus? Are freshmen required to live on campus?
- Are dorms co-ed or single sex?
- Do students leave campus on the weekends?
- What are the procedures for selecting a roommate?
- What are some of the rules and regulations that govern campus and dormitory life?

STUDENT POPULATION

- Where do the majority of students come from?
- Do most of the students commute or live on campus?
- What types of student activities are there? Are sororities and fraternities on campus?
- What athletic programs are available?
- Is the surrounding community supportive of the college?
- Does the college have a campus visitation program?
- Is housing available/guaranteed for freshmen? Is it available for all four years?
- Community service opportunities?



College Timeline

4 year colleges
2-year schools
Technical

Before Senior Year



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discuss with your parents school costs. Make a realistic plan of college costs. Use the FAFSA4caster to determine aid eligibility. EVERYONE needs to sign up for FAFSA so you can be eligible for grants and other scholarships- NOT JUST FOR LOANS.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Spring of your junior year sign up for the ACT with writing and/or the SAT. Sign up for SAT subject tests only if your applications require them. You should take the SAT and/or ACT at least twice.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Schedule college visits.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Begin preparing your personal essay and High School Resume.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A	Ask your teachers if they will be willing to write you a letter of recommendation for your college applications.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Get an appropriate e-mail address to use on all your college applications & correspondence. (Ex. Firstname.lastname@_____.com)

September / October Senior Year

Check the [Wicomico High School website](#) throughout the fall -- Attend college visits by admission representatives at WiHi. This is your opportunity to meet and ask questions of the admission representative who may later read your application.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Create a final list of colleges to apply to.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Begin applications on-line. Many colleges have them available in September.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Develop your personal essay. You may do a practice essay in your senior English courses. Essay prompts are unique to each application. Check if supplemental essays are also required.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approach your teachers for Letter of Recommendations (may be necessary for colleges and/or scholarships). Counselors ask for 2 weeks' notice, teachers would appreciate it too!
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	Prospective College Athletes: Information /registration on eligibility to play sports at Division 1 or 2 schools. Go to: NCAA Eligibility If you have not already done this in your Junior year, you must fill out an eligibility form
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A	Early Decision/Early Action Deadlines-many happen in late October/Early November. Early decision is binding, read applications carefully.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Check the internet for scholarships and contact colleges to which you are applying for financial assistance. Check the Scholarship postings through the Wicomico High School website .
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A	Some select private institutions require a CSS Profile application to be considered for their scholarships. Go to www.collegeboard.com for an on-line application, fees apply.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A	Set a goal to work on and complete your applications in November. Submit to schools by Thanksgiving to get the earliest priority for registration and housing.

October/November

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On-line application for the FAFSA (F ree A pplication for F ederal S tudent A id) begins October 1 st www.fafsa.ed.gov Complete in October for best outcome.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	College applications with January deadlines must be to the Guidance Office by December 10 th to guarantee processing before the holiday break.

January

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Check your mail and e-mail, offers of admission may start arriving for students who applied early. Check your junk mail folder; some items may end up there.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A	There is still time for college visitations if you haven't done so. Schedule an overnight stay in the dorms for a full college experience.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carefully read and respond promptly to all correspondence received from the colleges to which you have applied.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Financial aid deadlines are usually February 15 to April 15, check with your college. You must have completed the FAFSA (F ree A pplication for F ederal S tudent A id) to receive financial aid; grants, loans, work study, etc. You must apply by March 1 st if you want to receive Maryland state financial aid.

February/March

4 year college	2 year schools	Technical	
N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Apply on-line to 2 year community and technical college

April

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Most colleges notify students of admission (admitted, waitlisted or denied) and financial aid status by April 15th.
-------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	---

May/June

It's Decision Time - May 1st National Decision Day All students need to accept an admission offer from one school!

-
- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A | N/A | Notify all other colleges you were accepted to that you have chosen another school and are declining their offer of admission. <i>Your college acceptance is provisional until official final transcript is received.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | All seniors Need to take copies of all college acceptance and denial letters to your counselor. You also need to let your counselors know what scholarships/awards you've received. You will also complete two graduation surveys prior to graduation. |
-

Register
Online
Now

Note: Young men who turn 18 must register with the Selective Service within 30 days of their birthday. Register on-line at: <http://www.sss.gov>

Top 10 reasons to register for the Selective Service when you turn 18:

1. It's the law.
2. It keeps you eligible for a driver's license.
3. It keeps you eligible for gov't jobs.
4. Really, it's the law.
5. It keeps you eligible for college loans.
6. Did we mention it's the law?
7. It keeps you eligible for job training.
8. Girls like guys . . . with jobs.
9. It only takes a couple minutes
10. It's the law.



THE EDUCATION CONSERVANCY

WE ADMIT...GUIDANCE FROM THOSE WHO DO



Applying to college does not have to be overwhelming! The following principles and guidelines can help make the college admission process more manageable, more productive, and more educationally appropriate. This guidance is offered by the Education Conservancy, a group of admission professionals committed to calming the **commercial frenzy** by affirming educational values in college admission.

Principles

- These guiding principles are relevant for parents, students, counselors, and admission deans:
- Education is a process, not a product. Students are learners, not customers. The benefits and predictors of good education are knowable yet virtually impossible to measure.
- Rankings oversimplify and mislead.
- A student's intellectual skills and attitude about learning are more important than what college a student attends.
- Educational values are best served by admission practices that are consistent with these values.
- College admission should be part of an educational process directed toward student autonomy and intellectual maturity.
- Colleges can be assessed, but not ranked. Students can be evaluated, but not measured.
- Students' thoughts, ideas, and passions are worthy to be engaged and handled with utmost care.

Student Guidelines

An admission decision, test score, or GPA is not a measure of your self-worth. And, most students are admitted to colleges they want to attend. Knowing this, we encourage you to:

- Be confident! Take responsibility for your college admission process. The more you do for yourself, the better the results will be.
- Be deliberate! Applying to college involves thoughtful research to determine distinctions among colleges, as well as careful self-examination to identify your interests, learning style and other criteria.
- Plan to make well-considered applications to the most suitable colleges. This is often referred to as "making good matches."
- Be realistic and trust your instincts! Choosing a college is an important process, but not a life or death decision. Since there are limits to what you can know about colleges and about yourself, you should allow yourself to do educated guesswork.
- Be open-minded! Resist the notion that there is one perfect college. Great education happens in many places.
- Use a variety of resources for gathering information. Seek advice from those people who know you, care about you, and are willing to help.
- Be honest; be yourself! Do not try to game the system.
- Resist taking any standardized test numerous times (twice is usually sufficient)!
- Limit your applications to a well-researched and reasonable number. **No more than six** should be sufficient, except in special cases!
- Know that what you do in college is a better predictor of future success and happiness than where you go to college.

Parent Guidelines

An admission decision, test score, or GPA is not a measure of a student's worth. And, parents should always be mindful of the behavior they are modeling for their children. Knowing this, we encourage you to:

- Recognize that gaining admission to college is merely one step in a process of education that will include your student attending a college where she or he can maximize talents and growth. Emphasize the education.
- Resist doing for your students what they are capable of doing for themselves. Allow your child to take responsibility for his or her own part of the college application process. Be involved in the process, but do not try to control it.
- Resist relying on rankings and college selectivity to determine the most suitable colleges for your child.
- Realize that researching, selecting, and applying to colleges does not have to be an expensive process.
- Resist attempts to turn the process into a status competition. Develop a healthy, educationally based, and family-appropriate approach to college admissions.
- Gaming the system may not only diminish your child's self-confidence, it may also jeopardize desired admission outcomes.
- Listen to, encourage, and believe in your child. Do not use the term "we" as in "we are applying to...."
- Discuss the idea of education as an ongoing process, and how selecting a college might be different from buying a product.
- Love them enough to let them demonstrate the independence you have instilled in them.
- Keep this process in perspective. Remember that student skills, self-confidence, curiosity, and desire to learn are some of the most important ingredients in quality education and successful college admissions. Do not sacrifice these by overemphasizing getting into the "best" college.

This guidance is offered by the following veteran admission professionals:

Phillip Ballinger, University of Washington
Stephanie Balmer, Dickinson College
Michael Beseda, St. Mary's College-California
Jeff Brenzel, Yale University
Jennifer Delahunty, Kenyon College
J. Antonio Cabasco, Whitman College
Sean Callaway, Pace University
Sidonia Dalby, Smith College
Doris Davis, Cornell University
Melissa Ewing, The Bush School
Bill Fitzsimmons, Harvard University
Erica Johnson, Lewis & Clark College
Maria Laskaris, Dartmouth College
Matthew Malatesta, Union College

Brad MacGowan, Newton North High School
Bonnie Marcus, Bard College
David McDonald, Western Oregon University
Mark C. Moody, Colorado Academy
James Nondorf, University of Chicago
Marty O'Connell, Colleges That Change Lives
Bruce Poch, Pomona College
Jon Reider, San Francisco Univ. High School
Jeff Rickey, Earlham College
Kristine Sawicki, Reed College
Stuart Schmill, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
Michael Sexton, Santa Clara University
Jim Sumner, Grinnell College
Steven Syverson, Lawrence University



Exploring Colleges

COLLEGE VISITS AT WICOMICO HIGH SCHOOL:

Each fall approximately 20+ colleges visit our WiHi campus. This is an excellent opportunity for students to ask questions and meet admission representatives from colleges. The visit schedule is on our website, posted on Naviance, and on our daily announcements. See our website for specific rules about attending college visits. Students are responsible for things they miss in class to go to a college visit, and they should stay in class for projects, presentations, quizzes and exams.

THE COLLEGE CAMPUS VISIT

WHY SHOULD I VISIT A COLLEGE CAMPUS?

- Visiting the campus lets you get a firsthand view of a college and it is fun!
- Find out, "Is this college right for me?"

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR MY CAMPUS VISIT?

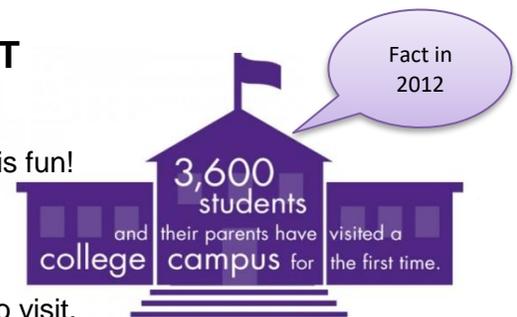
- Research a number of colleges to determine which you would like to visit.
- Determine the best time for you and your family to visit the campus.
- Contact colleges to schedule your visit (many colleges have preview days for future students, check their websites), take advantage of many aspects of a campus visit program: campus tour, classroom visit, information session, interview, appointments with important people on campus (financial aid, coaches, faculty, students, and staff), and overnight stays in student housing.
- Make sure to mention any necessary accommodations or special interests that you have.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING TO THE CAMPUS VISIT?

- Confirmation materials and campus map, camera, notebook and pen, academic transcripts, high school resume, list of important questions and expectations, appropriate clothing, and toiletries (if staying overnight)

WHAT SHOULD I DO DURING MY VISIT?

- Look at flyers and posters around campus to get a sense of campus life.
- Pick up a copy of student and local newspaper.
- Gather business cards and contact information of staff and faculty you meet.
- Sample campus dining.
- Strike up spontaneous conversations with random students on campus.
- Do not limit your visit to just the campus; check out the local surroundings.
- There is no such thing as a silly question. When in doubt, always ask.
- Visit the campus when classes are in session.
- Send thank you card to admissions and other staff you met with.





Questions for your Visit
Read the College's Mission Statement
Think about how closely they match your goals



WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER MY VISIT?

- Write down your observations, reflections, and impressions of your visit as soon as possible.
- Make a list of follow up questions and contact appropriate college personnel to get answers.
- Is a follow up visit necessary?

Academic fit

- Does this college have the academic program that I am interested in?
- How difficult will it be for me to get into my major? Is that process competitive?
- Are there a lot of students in my chosen academic program?
- What are graduates in the selected academic program doing now?
- How many students go on to graduate school?
- Does the teaching and learning style appeal to me?
- What is the average class size, student to faculty ratio?
- Is the teaching done by professors or teaching assistants?

Campus and residence life

- What is the campus meal plan like? Are there choices for people with special diets, vegetarian, gluten free, etc?
- What is the social scene like? What kinds of activities are planned by the college?
- How would you describe the security of the campus?
- Is there ample space in the dorms or does there seem to be a housing crunch? How many students are residents/commuters?
- What is the makeup of the current freshman class? Is the campus fairly diverse?
- What are the recreational facilities, library, and computer center like?
- What are the public transportation/parking options like?

Admission and application process

- Can you describe the application review process for me?
- What type of student is the college looking for?
- What type of student succeeds at your college/university?
- What percentage of applicants is accepted?
- What are the application deadlines, fees?
- What tests do I have to have (SAT, ACT with writing, SAT Subject Test)?

Student support services

- How available are faculty members to me? Is there tutoring available?
- If I need it, where can I go to get academic assistance?
- How are special accommodations arranged?

Financial aid

- What is the average financial aid package for incoming students?
- What scholarships does the college offer?

Overall: Do I feel welcome and at home here? Look at the students you see on campus, do you believe you will fit in? Is this what I pictured my college experience to be?

College Entrance Tests

See the Princeton Review for a comparison of the SAT to the ACT:

<http://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-act>

ACT Calendar:

Test Date	Registration Deadline	(Late Fee Required)
September 9, 2017	August 4, 2017	August 5-18, 2017
October 28, 2017	September 22, 2017	September 23-October 6, 2017
December 9, 2017	November 3, 2017	November 4-17, 2017
February 10, 2018*	January 12, 2018	January 13-19, 2018
April 14, 2018	March 9, 2018	March 10-23, 2018
June 9, 2018	May 4, 2018	May 5-18, 2018
July 14, 2018*	June 15, 2018	June 16-22, 2018

SAT Calendar:

SAT Date	Registration Deadline	Deadline for Changes
		Mail/Phone/ Online
August 26, 2017	July 28, 2017	August 8, 2017 (for mailed registrations) August 15, 2017 (for registrations made online or by phone)
October 7, 2017	September 8, 2017	September 19, 2017 (for mailed registrations) September 27, 2017 (for registrations made online or by phone)
November 4, 2017	October 5, 2017	October 17, 2017 (for mailed registrations) October 25, 2017 (for registrations made online or by phone)
December 2, 2017	November 2, 2017	November 14, 2017 (for mailed registrations) November 21, 2017 (for registrations made online or by phone)
March 10, 2018	February 9, 2018	February 20, 2018 (for mailed registrations) February 28, 2018 (for registrations made online or by phone)
May 5, 2018	April 6, 2018	April 17, 2018 (for mailed registrations) April 25, 2018 (for registrations made online or by phone)
June 2, 2018	May 3, 2018	May 15, 2018 (for mailed registrations) May 23, 2018 (for registrations made online or by phone)

Myths about Community College

Like most misconceptions, community college myths are based on elements of truth. But like most misconceptions, these myths lead to mistaken beliefs that could warp your ability to choose the right post-high school educational path for you.

Nationally, 40 percent of all traditional-age college students start out at community college, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Walt Disney went to a community college, so did H. Ross Perot, transplant surgeon Daniel Hayes, and NASA astronaut Eileen Collins, Pulitzer Prize winners and several governors also graduated from community colleges. So let's bust four of the most common myths about community colleges and let the truth speak for itself.

Myth 1: Students only attend community college because they can't get in to a four-year university.

Fact: Statistics refute this assumption. Many students attend community college for convenience, family, job, or financial considerations. Community college makes sense, purely for economic reasons. Community college tuition is lower and many courses are directly articulated with four-year college programs. Students save on boarding as they can live at home during the first two years of school.

Myth 2: A degree from a community college is not as good as a university degree.

Fact: A community college degree can take you straight into the workforce or to an elite four-year university. Community colleges educate 62 percent of allied health professionals and over 80 percent of law enforcement officers and firefighters, according to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

Myth 3: Community colleges are inexpensive, so the education is not high quality.

Fact: Community colleges may be less expensive than four-year universities, but that doesn't mean you sacrifice a quality education.

Myth 4: Community college credits do not transfer to four-year universities.

Fact: There are articulation agreements with four-year colleges for them to award credit for comparable courses taken at community colleges. Please check with the four year college you plan on attending to determine transfer credits.





Military Academy Applicants



Prestigious Military Academies are very highly selective colleges. **Plan accordingly** and read the information for highly selective colleges on their school website for further recommendations. Officer training can also be accessed through ROTC programs at various colleges.

- Contact the academies and obtain a Pre-Candidate Packet. Complete on-line.
- Contact the local liaison office of the academies you are interested to verify you are following all of the necessary steps to seek an appointment.

Air Force Academy www.usafa.af.mil

Liaison – Mrs. Gail D. Mader

Email: madercrew@comcast.net

Naval Academy www.usna.edu

Liaison- Ms. Alana Abernethy

Email: region1a@usna.edu

Military Academy at West Point www.usma.edu

Liaison - Mr. Bill Soer

Email: wsoer@aol.com

Coast Guard Academy www.cga.edu

Liaison- Lieutenant Aaron Corn

Email: Aaron.C.Corn@uscga.edu

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (King's Point) www.usmma.edu

Email: admissions@usmma.edu

- Contact your Congressmen's office about the process to secure an appointment to the academies.
- Take the ACT and/or SAT Reasoning Test. Send your test scores directly from SAT or ACT to the academies you're considering.
- Athletes! Remember if you are maintaining college athletic eligibility, code one of your score reports for the NCAA (#9999).
- You will need two or three letters of recommendation by the end of the first quarter of your senior year. Give your recommenders plenty of advance notice.
- Academies expect you are taking a rigorous curriculum; 4 or 5 college preparatory courses your senior year from the following subject areas (math, language arts, social studies, science and foreign language). Academies are generally unimpressed with seniors who take only 2 or 3 courses from these core areas their senior year. First semester senior year grades do matter.
- Establish a file folder at home for each academy to which you are making application.
- When you receive/send any information or correspondence related to academies keep copies for reference. This includes communication with academy liaisons, your congressman, and recruiters.

Your College Application List



Before filling out any applications develop a final list of approximately 4 – 6 schools, which you would be happy to attend. Your college list should include **reach, target and safety** schools. We highly encourage you to use a checklist to track/monitor application requirements and deadlines.

We have created one that you can use in this packet. When researching a college note the middle 50% range of test scores and range of GPA's of accepted students. **Be very aware of the acceptance rate!** Colleges that accept less than 25% of applicants should always be in the reach category. Figure out your own SAT/ACT and GPA profile. Rank your schools using the following criteria:

- **Reach Schools:** Apply to one: Going to this school would be a dream come true. It may fit into one of the following categories: You “fit” but the school is so selective that it turns away many “qualified” applicants, or you do not quite fit the profile of typically accepted students but you would love to attend. The school may have a very low acceptance rate. This school may also be one where it is a financial reach for your family but with the right scholarship and financial aid package it would work.
- **Target Schools:** Apply to one to three: A campus where you would be comfortable, and have access to programs that are academically challenging and interesting. You should closely match the profile of accepted students.
- **Safety Schools:** Apply to one or two: You exceed the average students profile and most qualified students are accepted. These schools typically have admittance rates above 70-75%. Community college can be a good safety school choice for some students.

After compiling your list confirm at least one school in each category is a financially feasible school for your family.

Avoid the “Designer-Label” trap! How successful you are at a school will be more important to your future than how prestigious the school is. Prestige and quality are not always found in the same institution. Look for the elements that will most directly support who you are as a student.

Most important: Remember you are in charge! The power in this process resides with you. You are responsible for the quality of your school performance and the effort you devote to the college search and application process. Those who make admissions decisions base their conclusions on what you present in your application. Give them your best work.

Demonstrating Interest

Now that you have your list, make sure you “demonstrate interest” **before, during** and **after** the application process. Because schools keep databases on student contacts many things you do are noted and may come into play when admission decisions are made. Appropriate demonstrations of interest may put you ahead of another candidate. Below is a list of potential points of contact that demonstrate interest.



- Attend functions put on locally by colleges you have on your list.
- Attend college visits at Wicomico High – come prepared with thoughtful questions.
- Pre-register for your college campus visit so the admissions staff knows you are coming.

- Request an appointment with an admission representative and financial aid counselor when visiting the campus.
- Make sure any contact with the college is from you *not your parent!*
- E-mail questions to admissions. Put your name in the email subject line. If the college contacts you reply in a thoughtful, thorough, and timely manner.

Clarifying Early Action / Early Decision

Early Action is the term used to describe the application process which permits a student to make application to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the normal response date. Decisions can be admit, hold for further review, or deny. The candidate is not committed to enroll at that particular institution. Student will be able to wait until May 1 to accept so that they can compare the financial offers of multiple schools.

- ◆ Student may apply to other colleges
- ◆ Institution will notify the applicant of the decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time after the Early Action deadline.
- ◆ Student applying for aid will adhere to institutional aid application deadlines.
- ◆ Student will not be required to make a commitment prior to May 1st but is encouraged to do so as soon as a final college choice is made.

Single-Choice Early Action is offered by some schools. This program differs from other Early Action programs, as it does not allow a student to apply to other schools under any type of early action, early decision or early notification program.

Early Decision is the term used to describe the application process in which a commitment is made by the student to the institution that **if admitted, the student will enroll**. Only a student who can make a deliberate and well-reasoned first choice decision should apply under early decision. If accepted you must attend that school and withdraw any applications sent to other schools. You won't be able to compare financial aid offers. Any student considering Early Decision should meet with their school counselor in September of senior year to go over this option.

- ◆ Student may apply to other colleges but submit only one Early Decision application.
- ◆ Institution will notify the applicant of the decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time after the Early Decision deadline.
- ◆ Student applying for aid will adhere to institutional Early Decision aid application deadlines.
- ◆ Institution will respond to application for financial aid at or near the time an offer of admission is extended.
- ◆ ***If admitted, student will enroll*** unless aid award is inadequate.
- ◆ Immediately upon acceptance of an offer, student will withdraw all other applications and make no subsequent applications.



Filling out College Applications

top tips...

- * Carefully read and follow directions! Many applications are designed to check how well the applicant can follow directions.
- * Make sure you've answered exactly what has been asked.
- * If you have questions about how to answer something in the application e-mail or call the admissions office.

Helping Hints for E-mailing Colleges: Below is an example of a very poor e-mail received by an admission counselor. (Thanks to Julie Shimabukuro of Washington University at St. Louis for sharing this and the tips below).

From: urafreak@internetserver.com^o
To: admissions.wustle.edu
Subject: please read!!!!!!!!

Get an appropriate e-mail address!

although today is the deadline for EDI, I wanted to send my latest SATs, JIC u didn't get them thru my school, their kind of slow. i really want u to know that I think WU is GR8 and is still my top choice. TIA!

Remember, e-mail is an easy way to communicate with college admissions offices, but here are a few reminders for students to keep their communication professional and clear.

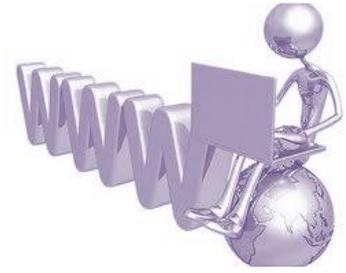
Do:

- ✘ Choose an appropriate e-mail screen name for collegiate correspondence. You may want to rethink names like partytildawn@hotmail.com or hatetostudy@yahoo.com
- ✘ Give your full name and contact information on each e-mail note. If you received a student ID number when setting up your on-line application account include that also.
- ✘ Be as polite and respectful in an e-mail as you would be in face-to-face meeting or on the telephone. Your correspondences are a reflection of you.
- ✘ Use proper punctuation and avoid using acronyms as much as possible.
- ✘ Use the "Reply" function to help schools remember the questions you asked in previous e-mails.
- ✘ Check the school's website before you send your e-mail questions. You may be able to find the answer quickly on the web. If you still have specific questions, then e-mail or call the school.
- ✘ Check your "junk" mail & spam settings to make sure you are receiving all correspondence from the schools you have applied to. Many schools send out important information as "bulk" mail to their applicant pools.
- ✘ If you set up an e-mail account specifically for college applications make sure you are checking it on a regular basis.

Don't:

- ✘ Use subject titles like "IMPORTANT INFORMATION" or "PLEASE READ!!!" since these titles are commonly used for "junk e-mail" or viruses and are screened out on many systems.
- ✘ Send blanket e-mails to a lot of institutions at once. Do some research and then ask specific questions indicating genuine interest in a specific college.
- ✘ Let your parents e-mail admissions for you. College applications and correspondence are your responsibility.

Applying Online



USE online applications! Most schools strongly encourage students to apply online. Applying online ensures you have filled out the application completely (many applications will not allow you to submit with incomplete or missing information); colleges receive on-line applications the day they are submitted, and applying online speeds up processing.

- Send your test scores directly from SAT/ACT to the colleges you are applying to. No need to wait until you have completed your application. Colleges will match your test scores once your application is submitted.
- You do not have to complete the entire application in one sitting. Once you have created a student profile or account you continue to save your application until it is complete and ready to submit.
- Type all essay and short answer questions in a word document, proof read and spell check, then copy and paste them into your application. Your formatting may change when you paste your document into an on-line application, but it will print correctly on the other end. Do not go over the maximum word/character count if one is specified. Your essay will be cut off at the maximum.
- Use a credit card to submit application fees on-line. A fee waiver may be possible if you need it.
- Use a valid e-mail address- one you access regularly. Check your “junk” mail & spam settings to make sure you are receiving all correspondence from the schools you have applied to. Many schools send out important information as “bulk” mail to their applicant pools.
- Check your online application account(s) to make sure documents have arrived and your application is complete. Mail any additional requested documentation immediately.
- After submitting your application confirm that SAT or ACT scores have been received.

Application Components

Every 4-year College and university, community college, and technical school requires applicants to submit different components. Research the documents that are required by exploring specific college’s website. The following is a list of items that may be included in the application process:

1. General application
2. Supplemental application **may** include letters of recommendation, essays (also called personal statement), and/or a resume or list of activities/achievements.
3. Request scores be sent directly from SAT or ACT. Send scores as soon as you begin applying to a college. **Do not wait!** Guidance **CANNOT** send your scores for you!
4. High school transcript: some colleges do not require transcript with the initial application. Read directions carefully. To request a transcript, please fill out the College Application Completion form from the Guidance Office (form included in this handbook).
5. See your counselor after you complete each college application.
6. Separate applications (with different due dates) may be required for honors, special programs, college scholarships.

Common Application: [Common Application](#)

College Application Procedures

Carefully assemble the following items before beginning in the college application process.

- A. **Applications:** Applications are available online at each college website under the admission tab and on [The Common Application](#) (if accepted at that college). This is the preferred way to apply. When creating your on-line application accounts keep good records of your logon and password information.
- B. **Transcript requests:** Complete the College Application Completion form for all official and unofficial transcripts and return to the Guidance Office. Allow ten school days for this to be processed. A form is included with this packet. Add the college you are applying to in Naviance and mark the application as submitted.
- C. **Application fee:** Online applicants will pay by credit card. Most four-year schools charge a non-refundable application fee. You may qualify for an application fee waiver. Check with your counselor if you think this applies to you.

Carefully read all instructions on the application. Read the directions and mark special courses appropriately.

AP = Advanced Placement
H = Honors

Before submitting your application, check the following:

- a. Application is complete.
- b. Personal Statement and resume have been pasted in the appropriate boxes.
- c. Print the receipt that shows your credit payment for your records.
- d. You have sent an official transcript **if required**.
- e. Your SAT/ACT test scores **have been sent directly to the college directly from the testing agencies**. Do any of your colleges require subject tests?
- f. Note for your records the dates you completed each of the above items.

Reporting SAT or ACT test scores: If you know your test results: Fill in the date and your score. **If you have not taken the test (or are taking it again):** Fill in the date you will be taking the test. If you did not send your results directly to the college(s) at the time of testing, go to the testing centers websites: [SAT](#) or [ACT](#) to send your scores. Do this as soon as you know you will be applying to a school. Test results can take time to arrive at the admissions office! Your application is not considered complete until the school receives your scores.

I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work. - Thomas Alva Edison

A dream becomes a goal when action is taken towards achieving it

*Define it
Want it
Believe it
Write it down
Split it up
Review it
Schedule it
Do it*

Without goals, and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination. Try to have applications completed by Thanksgiving



The Common Application

What is the Common Application? The Common Application is a not-for-profit organization that serves students and member institutions by providing an on-line admission application that students may submit to over 600 colleges or universities. Once completed online, copies of the Application for Undergraduate Admission can be sent to any number of participating colleges. The same is true of the School Report, Midyear Report, Final Report, and Teacher Evaluation forms. This allows students to spend less time on the busywork of applying for admission, and more time on what's really important: college research, visits, essay writing, and senior year coursework.

1. Complete the student application (**including all required supplements**) on-line at [Common Application](#).
2. Input your counselors and teachers names and e-mail addresses. Counselors and teachers receive an e-mail request from Common App after you enter their contact information. They then access a secure server to fill out the Teacher Evaluation (TE), School Report (SR)-this is the counselor recommendation, and Midyear Report (MR) through Naviance.
3. Before the counselors can complete their part of your application you must provide them with additional information. **Meet with your counselor to discuss next steps.** Bring a completed Counselor Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire so that your counselor can review it and gather information. You will find a Counselor Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire in this packet.
4. Counselors will upload your transcript online through Naviance.
5. Arrange for your SAT/ACT test scores to be sent directly to the colleges from the College Board (SAT) or ACT sites.
6. Be a proactive applicant and confirm with your counselor immediately after you have completed and submitted the applications.

The Common App is revised each year. Below is general information you will enter on-line through The Common Application including the new Essay prompts.

PROFILE	<p>Contacts Email address, phone number, mailing address</p> <p>Demographics Religion, military service, race/ethnicity (all optional)</p> <p>Geography Birthplace, countries lived in, language proficiency, citizenship</p>
FAMILY	<p>Household <i>Parent marital status, parent(s) with whom you reside</i></p> <p>Parent and/or Guardian <i>Name, birthplace, occupation, education, stepparent information</i></p> <p>Siblings <i>Age, grade, education</i></p>
EDUCATION	<p>School <i>Current school, dates attended, counselor name, phone and e-mail</i></p> <p>History <i>Previous schools, dates attended, past/pending education interruptions (e.g. time off, early graduation, gap year, etc.), college courses, college assistance programs</i></p> <p>Academic Information <i>GPA, class rank, current year courses, honors and awards</i></p>
TESTING	<p>College Entrance <i>ACT and SAT</i></p> <p>English for Non-Native Speakers <i>TOEFL, IELTS, PTE Academic</i></p>

	<p>Academic Subjects AP, SAT Subject Tests, A-Levels</p> <p>Other Optional reporting for other relevant 9 – 12 testing</p>
ACTIVITIES	<p>Principal Activities/Work Years of participation, hours per week, weeks per year, position/leadership held (50 characters), brief description (150 characters). 10 activities maximum</p>
ESSAY	<p>Select One – 650 word maximum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story. • The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience? • Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome? • Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution. • Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others. • Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more? • Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.
EXPLANATIONS	<p>Required Responses Explanations regarding school discipline¹, criminal history², education interruption, veteran discharge status</p>
ADDITIONAL INFO	<p>Optional Responses Relevant circumstances or qualifications not reflected elsewhere in the application</p>
COLLEGE PG. 1	<p>General Entry term, degree status, housing preference, test-optional preference, scholarship and financial aid preference</p> <p>Academics Academic interest, program(s) applying to</p> <p>Contacts Interactions with the institution (campus visit, off-campus interview, etc.)</p> <p>Family Family members who have attended or been employed by the institution.</p> <p>Evaluations Names of classroom teachers, coaches, other recommenders</p> <p>Residence Required by some public institutions to determine in-state status</p> <p>Signature Acknowledgments and affirmations</p>
COLLEGE PG. 2	<p>Writing Supplement Additional short answer or essay responses if requested by institution</p>

Note: Not all member colleges will ask all questions.

1. Have you ever been found responsible for a disciplinary violation at any educational institution you have attended from the 9th grade (or the international equivalent) forward, whether related to academic misconduct or behavioral misconduct that resulted in a disciplinary action? These actions could include, but are not limited to: probation, suspension, removal, dismissal, or expulsion from the institution.
2. Have you ever been adjudicated guilty or convicted of a misdemeanor, felony, or other crime? Note that you are not required to answer "yes" to this question, or provide an explanation, if the criminal adjudication or conviction has been expunged, sealed, annulled, pardoned, destroyed, erased, impounded, or otherwise ordered by a court to be kept confidential.

Colleges (not using the Common Application form)

Be aware that some colleges require supplemental forms! Fill out the student portion of the application on-line. Read the directions carefully about when and what forms are required.

1. **Send your SAT/ACT test scores** from the testing agencies directly to the college(s) you are applying to prior to completing your application.
2. Most schools require a **School Report/Counselor Recommendation Forms**. Make sure you have filled in and signed the student information section before bringing the forms in for processing.
3. **Teacher recommendation** must be coordinated with the teacher. **Ask the teacher in person first**, and then send them the request through Naviance. You might want to give them a copy of your resume so they have details to highlight.
4. **Send Official Transcript**. Find out whether this can be done electronically or if the college prefers a paper copy. Remember to fill out the College Application Completion form and return to the Guidance Office.

IMPORTANT DEADLINE INFORMATION!

The Guidance office requires a minimum 10 working days to process requests. School closures such as holidays and snow days are not counted in the ten days.

The **first Friday in December** is the deadline to request a letter of recommendation from your counselor before winter break.

Be aware of the college application deadlines, allow enough time for processing!

Writing Your High School Resume



1. Purpose of the High School Resume

High School Resumes are used to highlight your achievements. You will submit your resume with your culminating project, recommendation requests, and applications for some colleges and scholarships.

2. Your resume should include the following:

- GPA & test scores (if available) and selected courses
- School and community activities
- Honors and awards
- Work and volunteer experience
- Sports/Athletics
- Other special skills as talents (i.e. music, drama, clubs, etc)

3. Keep your resume to one page (if possible) – for examples check out one of these websites:

<http://www.aie.org/find-a-job/write-your-resume/sample-resumes-and-templates/Resume-Sample-High-School-Student-Academic.cfm>

https://kleinhs.kleinisd.net/users/0012/docs/Counseling/CC_HighSchoolResumeTips.pdf

www.groovejob.com/resources/resume/sample/

Letters of Recommendation

Check the application directions to be sure you have the required number of needed recommendations.

- * Guidance Counselor Letter of Recommendation Form (included in this handbook or on Naviance)
- * Teachers or staff: Letters from teachers of core subject courses taken in your junior year may be good choices. Ask the teacher toward the end of junior year or right away in the fall of senior year if they are willing to write a letter for you. Provide them with a current resume and any other information they need to write a good letter. Make sure you provide them with the list of schools, and the deadlines for each. Send the official request through Naviance. The teacher will upload the letter via Naviance.

Additional guidelines when asking for letters:

- Find people willing to write you Letters of Recommendations early.
- Consider asking teachers from junior year's core subjects as they know you best.
- Send a written thank you to each person writing you a letter.
- Do not ask them at the last minute- teachers will not write letters unless you give them ample notice. Remember, they are not required to write a letter for you!

Writing the College Essay

Almost all colleges & universities require applicants to submit either a personal statement or short answer essay(s). Sometimes the college provides specific guidelines in terms of topic, length, and even format; while other times the prompt may be as general as “Tell us something about you.” But for all schools, the essay is a significant part of the application. It allows the reader know what’s important to you, how you think about things, and who you are as a person. Be sure the essay or personal statement you submit represents your very best work. It is very important that the essay you submit is your own work. Be original! **Note:** The written essay you complete during the SAT writing section is sent along with your scores as a sample of your writing ability.

Always write the essay even if not required! Some schools use essays to decide merit and/or departmental scholarships. It is your opportunity to tell them other things about yourself that may enhance your admissions chances. Applicants need to be wary of books or websites that market “successful” or “effective” college essays. There is not a formula for writing a “perfect” essay.

From: Tips - University of California, Berkeley

Characteristics of a Good Personal Statement

Before you write, make sure you know what is expected of a successful college essay.

A good essay . . .

-Is thoughtful and honest

A strong personal statement is reflective; that is, it demonstrates that you have thought about and gained a clear perspective on your experiences and what you want in your future. It does not simply tell a reader what you think he/she wants to know. Instead, it gives the reader a vivid and compelling picture of you--in essence, telling the reader what he or she should know about you. Remember that the focus of the essay is YOU--your achievements, your obstacles, your goals, your values.

-Strives for depth, not breadth

A good essay is not a list of your accomplishments. Remember when your mom told you that it's quality, not quantity that counts? Well, the same adage applies for your college essay. A reader will be much more interested in how your experience demonstrates the theme of your essay, not the number of accomplishments you can list. What is NOT interesting: an essay that devotes one paragraph each to a variety of different topics. This type of approach denies you the ability to give depth to your essay.

-Follows the conventions of good writing

A good essay uses appropriate grammar and syntax, uses precise and vivid language, and does not contain any spelling errors.

-Conforms to guidelines

If the essay instructions tell you that the essay should be two pages long, on white 8.5x11 inch paper, then the essay should be two pages long, on white 8.5 x 11 inch paper. Less is not more, and more is not better, either.

-Answers the question!

A good essay is the result of a writer who has examined the essay question and written an essay that explicitly addresses that question. For example, if you are asked to describe your greatest accomplishment or any unusual circumstances or challenges you have faced, then your reader will expect you to use vivid language that will enable the reader to visualize your accomplishment and share your sense of success.

-Benefits from several drafts and feedback from others

Revision allows an essay to grow. Revising is not editing; revising is the act of "re-seeing" and of looking for those parts of the essay that would benefit from more explication, more (or less) vivid language, or even deleting parts

that simply don't work to move your primary theme forward. Similarly, feedback from others can help you identify those parts of the essay that work well--and those that don't.

-Contains a catchy introduction that will keep the reader interested

It is important to recognize that essay readers will read hundreds, maybe even thousands, of essays during the application review period. That means that an essay with a catchy introduction, one that gets right to the point and uses precise language and vivid imagery, is going to stand out more than an essay that is predictable and conventional in its opener.

-Transforms blemishes into positives

It's okay to have flaws! The essay is your chance to show how you have transformed blemishes. For example, if your essay theme is "overcoming obstacles" and you earned a poor grade in a class, but went to a community college at night to repeat the course, it is important for your reader to know this because it is an example of your perseverance. The reader does not want to hear complaints about poor grades or circumstances, but rather wants to know how you have overcome them.

-Demonstrates your knowledge of the major/college

No one expects you to know everything about the college or university to which you are applying. However, readers will want to know that you have done your homework. For example, if you write an essay that states your interest in becoming an engineer, but the college does not have an engineering program, then you haven't done your homework.

-Exudes confidence--you will be successful no matter what

A good essay doesn't beg or brag. Colleges and universities want to admit the best students, and the best students are those who can demonstrate their ability to pursue their goals regardless of where they are admitted. Think of this as quiet confidence--the kind that reveals itself through your description of lifelong interests, sustained commitment, and/or perseverance in the face of adversity.

Keep these characteristics of a good essay in mind as you compose. And be sure to avoid the typical college essay blunders.

From Randolph-Macon College: "Writing Your College Essay-Do's & Don'ts"

Do's

- Do think small & write about something that you know about.
- Do reveal yourself in your writing.
- Do show rather than tell. By giving examples & illustrating your topic you help bring it to life.
- Do write in your own "voice" & style.

Don'ts

- Don't write what you think others want to read.
- Don't exaggerate or write to impress.
- Don't use a flowery, inflated, or pretentious style.
- Don't neglect the technical part of your essay (grammar, spelling, sentence structure).
- Don't ramble - say what you have to say & conclude.

There are a number of good resources available online to guide you with writing your college essays. Check out the following: www.myessay.com/ , www.goodessaytopics.com/ <http://collegeapps.about.com>



Applying for Financial Aid

*Remember: Applying
for the FAFSA is
always free!*

- Estimate if you are going to qualify for need based financial aid at www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov

Free Application Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

1. Why should parents fill out the Free Application Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form?
www.fafsa.ed.gov

All parents must fill out the FAFSA to qualify for the four types of aid: grants, loans (both parent and student loans), work study positions, and need-based scholarships. Think you can't afford college? Remember that the amount of financial aid given to families will change depending on the price of the school. Parents are encouraged to fill out the form regardless of their income level and apply as soon after October 1st as possible to take advantage of state and federal monies given on a first come first serve basis. Some schools require the FAFSA on file prior to awarding some need based scholarships. **Applying for the FAFSA is always free.**

2. When can I apply for financial aid?

Senior parents fill out a FAFSA after October 1, 2017 of their students' senior year. The process needs to be completed on an annual basis. The FAFSA online is a secure site.

3. Should I fill out the online FAFSA form or a paper version?

We highly recommend using the online version. It allows families to update the form from year to year and errors and omissions are caught and corrected prior to submission. The on-line version is processed quickly giving you an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) number. Results are sent directly to the colleges' financial aid offices you select to receive them.

4. **Financial Aid Forms:** Log onto <https://fafsa.ed.gov> for general information, how to apply, and deadlines for financial aid.

Types of financial aid available

Grants Grants are need based and don't have to be repaid. Grant aid comes from federal, state governments, and from individual colleges.

- Public schools tend to give grants to students with very low income.
- Private schools use grant monies to attract students they want.

Loans Most financial aid comes in the form of loans, aid that must be repaid. Most loans that are awarded based on financial need are low-interest loans sponsored by the federal government. Some of these loans are subsidized by the government so no interest accrues until you begin repayment after you graduate.

To qualify for loans or any other financial aid—students must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA each quarter and be enrolled at least half time.

Do you plan on taking out a loan to help pay for your students' college? Make sure you find out if the type of loan is subsidized or unsubsidized. Interest on subsidized loans does not accrue while the student is enrolled full time.

Parent Plus Loans are need based and can be granted for up to as much as the cost of a school. Parents will pay an origination fee and are low interest. Parents cannot borrow more than the cost of attendance using a Parent Plus Loan.

Bank Loans Thinking about taking out a bank loan? Private Educational Loans tend to be high interest. Make sure you speak with your financial advisor about your options.

Student Loans: Do you plan on having your student help pay for college through loans? Know their limits. Students Stafford loans, maximum per year:

1 st year: \$5,500	3 rd year: \$7,500
2 nd year: \$6,500	4 th year: \$7,500

The Stafford Loan is a low interest loan with a debt cap of \$31,000. To continue to qualify for this loan—or any other financial aid—students must maintain a 2.0 GPA each quarter and be enrolled at least half time. Students begin making monthly payments six months after they graduate or leave school. Does your child fully understand what it means to take out and pay back a loan? Some colleges require students to go through loan counseling before they qualify. Guidance recommends parents talk with their children about the positives and negatives of loans.

Work Study - Work study positions are need based. Student employment and work-study aid helps students pay for education costs such as books, supplies, and personal expenses. Work-study is a federal program which provides students with part-time employment to help meet their financial needs and gives them work experience while serving their campuses and surrounding communities.

Scholarships (Need and/or Merit Based) Students are encouraged to apply for local, state and community scholarship through the **Wicomico High School website**. Many scholarships are awarded based on merit, ethnic background, community service, leadership, and personal interests regardless of financial need. Students should be searching and applying for scholarships while they are applying to colleges. Most colleges have scholarship money that they give out on a first come, first serve basis for students who meet specific academic requirements. Check with the colleges you are applying to for specific institutional scholarships. Financial aid counselors also recommend students register with www.fastweb.com for a customized scholarship search. Wicomico High School posts scholarships at <http://wihi.wcboe.org>.

College Savings Plans Are you saving money for college for your student? Where are you saving it? Is the money in your name or your child's? Where your money resides will determine how much it will get taxed and how it will impact your FAFSA results? Always consult with your professional tax advisor for details.

Credit Card and Private Loan Debt Check out the "Debt Slapped" video on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpNnzmMIQAE>.

Common Mistakes in the College Financial Aid Game

- Not applying for financial aid because they “think” they won’t qualify.
- Assuming expensive private colleges are out of reach. Some may offer significant financial aid.
- Waiting too long to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form (FAFSA) with the U.S. Department of Education. This paperwork determines how much federal aid families receive. FAFSA applications for the 2018-19 school-year will begin October 1, 2017. The application process calls for figures from the prior year’s tax return. You can use the auto-retrieval button to populate some financial information directly from the IRS. **You must apply by March 1st for Maryland State aid!**
- Assuming there are thousands of dollars available through scholarships if students will only search for them. Significant national scholarships often go to “superstars.” Solid students may be better off pursuing local scholarships. By applying for multiple local scholarships, students at Wicomico High School have been very successful in accumulating thousands of dollars. Remember to visit the Wicomico High School website for more information: <http://wih.wcboe.org>.
- Assuming financial aid from a college will continue past the first year. Families should confirm any financial aid package with the college. Determine what is required for the scholarship to renew.
- Failing to understand that financing college often means borrowing money and working. Families need to have open financial discussions with their student prior to selecting and applying to colleges.
- Paying companies to search for financial aid or scholarships. Paid services are often scams.
- Assuming students will get a good financial aid offer from an **out-of-state public** university. Schools often reserve their need-based aid for residents.

Scholarship Applications



1. **Who should apply for scholarships?** All students! Any students interested in attending a technical college, community college, or 4-year school should consider applying for free money to help pay for school.
2. **When should I apply for a scholarship?** Most scholarships are offered during senior year, but occasionally students have the opportunity to apply during junior year as well. You should start to become familiar with the process beginning in December of your junior year.
3. **Where can I find out about local scholarships?** Go to <http://wihi.wcboe.org>. Scholarships with their requirements and due dates are updated on a regular basis.
4. **Where can I find out about national scholarships?** Go to www.fastweb.com for a list of national scholarships. You will be asked a series of qualifying questions and then have access to information on how to apply for scholarships that you meet the requirements for. Note: You may want to set up a separate e-mail account just for scholarship notifications from FastWeb.
5. **Who qualifies for a scholarship?** Many scholarships are based on financial need and/or academic merit, but not all. Some scholarships are based on community service participation or the ability to have overcome obstacles.
6. **Who is my competition?** When considering whether or not you want to apply for particular scholarship, take into account who you might be competing with. Are you only going to be competing with students at Wicomico High School? If only five or six students apply for the scholarship, your chances of receiving a scholarship are higher than if you are applying for a nationwide scholarship. Your competition will be much greater when applying for national scholarships. The obstacles that you have overcome, GPA, and community service participation are also relative to the group that applies, so keep that in mind as well.
7. **What other items are required besides the application?** Many scholarships require you to submit a resume, letters of recommendation, and/or an essay. Applying for scholarships should never require you to pay a fee!
8. **What points should I remember when filling out scholarships?**
 - **Presentation goes a LONG way!** Make sure your application is representative of your best work. As with college applications follow directions carefully. Spelling, word usage, and grammar mistakes are a sure way to get people to put your paperwork at the bottom of the pile! Put your application in a clean manila envelope. Don't fold your application. Address the envelope with your name; return address and the name of the scholarship, plus the address of the review committee.
 - **Keep your resume to one page.** Remember that scholarship review committees have many scholarship applications to read and a two or three-page document can in some reviewer's eyes actually count against you.

- **Give a copy of your high school resume** to the people that you plan to request a letter of recommendation from. This helps them write a letter that covers all the things you have accomplished.
- **Be yourself in your essay!** Do not write what you think others want to read. Don't be pretentious, or exaggerate to impress. Readers pick up on your lack of true voice and may get turned off. Instead, write about things that make you unique. Show rather than tell. By giving examples and illustrating your topic, you help bring it to life.
- **And last but not least...** have friends and family proofread your application, resume, and essay. Often times another set of eyes can pick up on mechanical errors that you have overlooked.
- **Don't wait until the deadline to turn in your applications. Earlier is better!**
- **It is always appropriate to write a thank you note to the organization awarding you a scholarship!**

Additional information about Financial Aid

AmeriCorps

www.americorps.org

College Bound Scholarship

www.readysetgrad.org

CSS for Private Schools

<https://student.collegeboard.org/CSS-financial-Aid-Profile>

FAFSA

www.fafsa.ed.gov

FastWeb Scholarship Search

www.fastweb.com

Federal Direct Loans

www.ed.gov/DirectLoan

Federal PIN

www.pin.ed.gov

FinAid / Savings Calculators

www.finaid.org

JobCorps

www.jobcorps.org

Project Scholarship Scam

www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams

Resources by State

www.finaid.org/otheraid/state.phtml

U.S. Department of Education

www.ed.gov



College Cost Calculators

College Cost/ Loan Calculator

www.fastweb.com

Scholarship Scams

Searching for a Scholarship? Buyer Beware!*

This section is included to alert families to a concern that is increasingly widespread: fraudulent scholarship search services or in other words, SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS. Hundreds of scholarship services are on the market, but many are scams. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recently launched Project Scholarship Scam to alert consumers about fraudulent search services. The FTC warns students to beware if the scholarship service:

- Guarantees that a student has won a scholarship.
- Pledges that this scholarship information is not available anywhere else.
- Requests a credit card or bank account number so that they can hold the scholarship for the student.
- Requests payment before they can give the scholarship.
- Claims “a national foundation has selected you to receive a scholarship” or “you are a finalist” in a contest you never entered.

How else can you be aware of scams?

Scholarship Scams usually have a particular set of characteristics. Watch out for these warning signs:

- Application fees
- Other fees
- Guaranteed winnings
- Everybody is eligible
- Unsolicited opportunities
- Typing & spelling errors
- No telephone number
- Mail drop for a return address
- Operating out of a residence
- Masquerading as a federal agency
- Time pressure
- Unusual requests for personal information
- Notification by phone
- High success rates
- Excessive hype
- Disguised advertising
- A newly formed company



For more information go to:

www.fraud.org OR <http://www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml>



I've Applied - - - Now What???

- Respond promptly to any requests for additional information. Make sure you are checking your on-line application status, e-mail, snail mail, etc.
- Continue to demonstrate interest (as appropriate).
- Begin applying for scholarships.
- Fill out your FAFSA starting October 1st of your senior year.
- If you change your senior schedule you **must** notify the colleges.
- Maintain your grades and extra-curricular activities at the same level you stated in your applications.
- College notification of acceptance happens anywhere from mid-December through April.

If accepted:

Determine the date by which you must tell the college you are accepting or declining their admission offer. The national date to tell one school you will attend is May 1st. Notify all other schools where you have been accepted that you are declining their offer of admission. Offers such as direct admission into your major and honors should be given strong consideration.

If waitlisted:

We highly recommend if you still want to attend the school that you contact admissions by e-mail or formal letter to express continued interest. Failure to do so may result in the school assuming you are not interested and removing you from the waitlist. Be sure to highlight why it would be a great school for you, **updating any new accomplishments or improved grades and what you will bring to their campus as a student**. Ask the school if any additional information is needed, mid-year grades, additional letters of recommendations, etc. Find out how they will process their waitlist. Maintain appropriate contact with your other schools.

If denied:

Contact the admissions office to explore appeal options (if appropriate). Appeals are rarely successful so keep at least one of your other options active.

Additional Resources for College Planning Help

ACT

PLAN, ACT exams, college search/financial aid.

www.act.org

The College Board

PSAT, SAT, SAT subject tests, college/career search/financial aid.

www.collegeboard.org

Common Application

One application for over 300 colleges.

www.commonapp.org

My Majors

A tool to help students identify their skills/interest and match majors.

www.mymajors.com or www.myplan.com

Naviance

College and career planning tools and college application process.

<https://connection.naviance.com>

NCAA

Clearinghouse for eligibility for prospective athletes to play in college.

www.ncaa.org

NAIA

Information on athletics at smaller colleges.

www.naia.org

Vocational Trade Schools

<http://www.rwm.org/>

Books:

Antonoff:	The College Finder College Match – A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School for You
Bauld	On Writing the College Application Essay: The Key to Acceptance at the College of Your Choice
Cohen:	Rock Hard Apps
Fiske's:	Guide To College Guide to getting into the right College
Hallowell:	Learning Outside the Lines – Two Ivy Students with Learning Disabilities & ADHD give you tools for academic success
Jones:	Less Stress, More Success- Guide your teen through college admission and beyond
Kilpatrick:	The Winning Edge; a student guide to college sports
Loveland:	Creative Colleges for Student Actors, Artists, Dancers, Musicians and Writers
Orr:	America's Best Colleges for 'B' Students
Patterson's:	Schools Classified and Books of Majors
Pierce&Rilly	Countdown to College:21 To Do Lists for High School
Peterson's:	Christian Colleges and Universities, Game Plan for Getting into College College Guide for Visual Arts Majors Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities & ADD Guide to Vocational and Technical Schools of the West Insider's Guide to College Admissions
Pope:	Looking beyond the Ivy League; finding the college that is right for you Colleges that Change lives
Robinson	Escape Essay Hell: A Step by Step Guide to Writing Narrative College Application Essays

COLLEGE APPLICATION TRACKING SHEET

College Name	College Name	College Name

Applications

Locate online application			
Common App or Website App?			
Username & Password for application	UN: PW:	UN: PW:	UN: PW:
Other requirements (supplements, portfolio submissions, etc)			
Application deadline (Regular, ED, EA)			
Safety? Likely? Reach?			
Application Fee			
Online Application submitted			
Other requirements submitted			

Essays

How many essay(s) & short answer(s)			
Write essay(s) & short answer(s)			
Have two people review essay(s)			
Revise essay(s)			

Common App – Under “Education”

“Assign Recommenders”?			
Submit FERPA Waiver			
Clicked on “Send Invite”?			

Transcript Request—students must request from Guidance

Submit “College Application Submission Form” (located in the Guidance Office) to Guidance Office five (5) working days in advance			
---	--	--	--

Test Scores – must be sent officially through testing agency

SAT required/Date Sent			
ACT required/Date Sent			
SAT Subject Tests required/Date Sent			

College Name	College Name	College Name

Letter of Recommendation – at least TEN WORKING DAYS in advance

Counselor Letter required?			
Counselor Letter of Rec. requested?			
Teacher Letters of Rec. required?			
Fill out “Counselor Letter of Recommendation Form” (located in the Guidance Office & Naviance) Due 3 weeks prior to college deadline			
Request Recommendations:			
Teacher 1: _____			
Teacher 2: _____			
Follow-up w/teachers & counselor to see if they need anything else			
Send thank you notes to recommenders			

Interview – if required OR recommended

Interview at college			
Interviewed with? Name(s) & Title(s)			
Send thank you notes to interviewer(s)			

Track Your Application

Confirm receipt of application materials (usually you can check your status online... but give it at least 2 weeks after it’s sent)			
Notify your counselor of the outcome!			

Federal Financial Aid – Oct. 1 Every student needs to complete financial aid applications

Need based aid? Merit?			
Create FAFSA PIN Number www.pin.ed.gov			
Priority Financial Aid deadline			
Regular Financial Aid deadline			
Submit FAFSA or CSS Profile (if needed)			

Counselor Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire

Name: _____ Cell/Home Phone #: _____
Student Email: _____ Additional Phone #: _____

1. Colleges to which you might apply:	Visited? (yes/no)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Are you the first of your siblings to attend college? If not, which colleges did your siblings attend? _____

3. Which courses at Wicomico High School have you enjoyed the most? Why?

4. Which courses have given you the most difficulty? What steps did you take to overcome the challenge? _____

5. What 3 words would **you** use to describe yourself?

What 3 words would a **teacher** use to describe you?

What 3 words would a **friend** use to describe you?

6. What have you accomplished that makes you feel good or proud of yourself? Please describe in detail. _____

7. Have there been changes, positive or negative, or a particular situation that has occurred in your high school years that you feel may have influenced you, your grades, or your participation in school? (Example: illness in family or self, divorce, summer experience, volunteer work, etc.) ***PLEASE NOTE IF THIS INFORMATION SHOULD BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT BE USED IN YOUR LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION!** _____

8. What are your strong points- personal traits, academic talents, athletic strengths, accomplishments, etc.? _____

9. What are your current career goals? How do they shape your choice of a college major and post-secondary plans? If undecided, name some area you are considering or characteristics of a job that are important to you. (Example: helping others, working on computers, etc.) _____

10. What person(s) do you admire? Why? _____

11. What is important to you? What do you like to do more than anything else? What is your "passion"? (Example: sports, music, family, art, etc.) _____

12. Describe an area of yourself that you wish to develop or further strengthen. _____

13. Odds and Ends: You do not have to answer every question, but this section will assist me in getting to know you better.

a. Favorite quotation: _____

b. Favorite Wicomico High School teacher: _____

14. Please tell us how you earned the majority of your Service Learning Hours. _____

15. Are you employed? Where? _____

If your application is officially submitted, and marked as "Submitted" on Naviance, you must fill out this form and turn into your guidance counselor for each school you are applying to. It is understood that the student is responsible for submitting the required test scores (SAT,ACT) to the college and is responsible for completing the FAFSA.

College Application Completion Form

- **Student Name:** _____
- **College/University:** _____
- **Application Type?** **Early Action** **Early Decision** **Regular Decision**
- **Application Deadline:** _____
- **How did you apply?** **Common App** **School's Website** **Other**
- **Do you want/need any letters of recommendation sent (other than your counselor)?**
 - Yes** **No**
 - **If so, how many letters are being sent with this application?** _____
 - **List the names of the teachers you want the letters from.**

Signature _____

Date _____

Counselor Use:

Date Form Was Received _____

Date Documents Were Sent _____

Additional Notes
