

College Admissions Process

Do Your Research

- Check out college websites. Take virtual tours on the school's websites. Check out the admissions page to get detailed requirements for incoming freshmen.
- Participate in a college search inventory on Naviance.
- Utilize Naviance for career information and college profiles.
- Talk to current students or recent graduates.
- Go on a college visit. Set up a formal visit through the school's website. Complete a college visit form and turn into the main office at least 2 days in advance.
- Attend College Fairs
- Attend Taylor High School College Admissions Rep Visits. Sign up through homeroom.

Get Organized

- Naviance will record your deadlines for admission for all of the schools you enter. Make sure you know both the admission and scholarship deadlines for each school.
- Check out the scholarship list in Naviance to see all scholarships that come through the guidance office. It is up to you to apply to these scholarships.
- Create a scholarship profile using the tool on Naviance. You may also choose use another FREE scholarship website you find online.
- Record your activities, jobs, volunteer and leadership experiences in Naviance using the resume tool or create a journal document. You will need this information many times throughout your senior year. List anything that may even be close to something that colleges or scholarship donors may want to know about you.
- Start thinking about a personal essay you can write to show colleges and scholarship donors who you are and who you want to become. Many times they would like to hear about any obstacles you have overcome in your life. Begin to create a short essay (1-2 pages) that you can go back to when needed as you begin the admissions process.

Get Involved

- The most common thing for colleges and scholarship donors to inquire about are the activities and volunteer experiences you have done in high school. They want to know that you are well rounded student and invested in your school and community. Join as many clubs as you can. Play a sport. Be an active member of your church. Volunteer at local non profits.
- Create a project for your school, church or club where you can demonstrate leadership skills.
- Get a part time job
- Don't wait until senior year! Get involved early and often. Getting involved helps you to make connections, friendships and building lasting relationships. Students who are involved have a better experience in school.

Testing

- Almost all schools will require college admission testing of some sort. If you are applying to a 4 year school, you will need to take the ACT or SAT. Many schools will take either test, but you will want to check with your school to confirm.
- You must register for the ACT or SAT online. You must have a credit card to register. If you are on free or reduced lunch, you can get up to 2 fee waivers a year. You should request this from your counselor. Registrations deadlines are often a month in advance.
- You should start taking these tests your junior year. You will want to have a score you like by the Fall of your senior year. For many schools, the October test of senior year is the latest test you could take to meet college admission deadlines.
- To prep for these tests, you can go online to their websites and start taking practice tests. Test prep companies often run “boot camps” to learn test taking skills. These do have a cost but many students find them extremely helpful. You can find free test prep at ohiomeansjobs.com or <https://www.khanacademy.org/>
- If you are applying to a 2 year college, these schools will often have their own placement tests that you will need to take to gain full admission.

Apply

- Once you have done your research, it's time to apply for admission to colleges or postsecondary institutions. Applications can almost always be found online at the school's website.
- When applying, make sure you are proofreading everything before submitting. Don't submit an essay until you have had someone else read it: a parent, teacher, counselor, etc.
- Use your Naviance account to request transcripts. See the instructions listed under the Naviance section to submit transcripts.
- Request letters of recommendation through Naviance. You need to give your recommenders plenty of notice. Make sure you ask them to write you a letter before you send them anything. Do not just assume that they will do so. Pick people who you have a good relationship and who have seen you directly in the classroom or in a club/group/sport. Follow up with your recommenders and thank them for taking the time to write you a letter. Remember, in the common app your counselors are required to write a written evaluation of you. That is why it is important to communicate with them about the activities you have done throughout high school.
- After applying, follow up on Naviance to make sure all documentation has been sent. This is your responsibility. If something still needs to be sent, politely communicate that to the appropriate party. Many colleges send you an automatic emailing stating that they need your transcript and scores after an application has been submitted. This does not mean your documents have not been sent, this is a standard email. Wait a week and then check on the status of your application. Things can get lost in the mail and cyberspace so it is always good to follow up before your deadlines.

Financial Aid

- It is extremely common for students to require financial aid to pay for college. In order to receive any state or federal funding to go to school, you must submit the FAFSA form. You will need to submit a FAFSA every year you are in school if you need grants or loans from the state or federal government. This form can be completed online any time after October 1st. <https://fafsa.ed.gov/> This year's seniors will use the 2015 tax data for their family. Your parents need to be involved in this process. You will need to use their income information, even if they do not plan on financially supporting you in college.
- You and one of your parents must have a FSA ID. This is an electronic signature. <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm> You can apply for this online. This will be used to sign the FAFSA.
- After you submit the FAFSA, your school will electronically send you a Student Aid Report (SAR.) It is important to review this to make sure all information is correct. The school will then present you with a financial aid package award that will help you make decisions about which school is right for you based on the amount of award given.
- There are essentially three different ways to get a scholarship. The first would be from the schools you are applying to. This is where you will often get the most money. Each school is different in their process. Many schools will automatically consider you for scholarships once you apply. Other schools have a separate application and deadline. This is up to you to organize. The 2nd way to get scholarships is by checking Naviance and applying to the local and regional scholarships we receive in the THS guidance office. We post everything we receive in the Colleges Tab under Scholarship List. You should apply for as many of these as possible. We will be giving the General Scholarship Form to all senior students in English classes. This form is sent to approximately 15 donors and all of this money is awarded at the Senior Award's Night. Make sure you turn this in! Every year we have students who choose to not turn this in and it may have cost them free money! Complete this in pen, make sure you proofread, and include any supporting documents that may help donors get to know you. The third way to get scholarships is through a national scholarship search. You should never pay money to have someone conduct this for you. These are often scams. You can go through Naviance and complete the profile through Sallie Mae. There are several other free scholarship search engines online that are also helpful. Apply to as many scholarships as you can. It's worth it!

After you've been admitted

- Congrats- you've been accepted! Now it's time to make some tough decisions about which college you are choosing. You may have to wait until all offers are communicated to you to make the best choice. Compare costs, opportunities and pros and cons of each school to make the best decision for you.
- Reacquaint yourself with each school. You may want to go on another visit just to make sure you have all questions answered.

- Talk to current students. Ask them to attend a class with them or take a tour of the dorms.
- Talk it over with your family. Make sure you are clear about the finances and obligations you will have when choosing a specific college.
- After you make your choice, contact the schools that you will not attend. This is a courteous gesture that allows colleges to accept other students that may be waitlisted.
- Most students will be required to submit a financial deposit to the college that you plan to attend. Make sure that you don't miss any deadlines. This will "hold your spot" at the college or university.
- Keep up the good work! Final senior grades really do matter so try your best to the very end!