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Your High School Transcript

Below is a sample of an RDHS transcript. Note that marking period grades, attendance, teacher comments, and test scores are *not* included on our transcripts.

River Dell Regional School District									
Student Name & Address Riverdell, Joe 123 Main Street River Edge, NJ 07661							High School Name & Address River Dell High School 55 Pyle St Oradell, NJ 07649 201-599-7238		
Parent or Guardian Mrs. Jane Riverdell		Student ID 123456	Sex M	Date of Birth 1/01/2000	State ID Number 1234567890				
Guidance Counselor Counselor, Pat		CEEB Code 311054	Entry 09/05/2015	Withdrawal	Graduation				
<u>Student Academic History</u>						<input type="checkbox"/> Official Transcript <input type="checkbox"/> Student Copy			
Grade 09 Year 2015-16		Final Grade	Credits	**Online-Educere Grade 10 Year 2016-17		Final Grade	Credits		
Honors English 9		83	10.000	Public Speaking		86	2.500		
Honors World Civilizations		76	5.000	Money Management		93	2.500		
Honors Geometry		78	5.000	Honors English 10		62	0.000		
Honors Physics		82	5.000	US History I		82	5.000		
Spanish II		90	5.000	Advanced Algebra II w/Trig		87	5.000		
Physical Education 9		97	5.000	Chemistry		81	5.000		
Intro to Television Production		91	5.000	Spanish III		89	5.000		
				Physical Education 10		97	5.000		
				TV Production II		83	5.000		
				**American Literature		92	5.000		
Weighted GPA 86.8750		Credits Earned 40.000		Weighted GPA 84.7222		Credits Earned 40.000			
Grade 11 Year 2017-18		Final Grade	Credits	Grade 12 Year 2018-19		Final Grade	Credits		
Accounting		95	2.500	English 12					
Marketing		91	2.500	Honors Calculus					
English 11		80	5.000	Intro to Computer Programming					
US History II		96	5.000	AP Physics C					
Pre-Calculus		97	5.000	Spanish V					
Biology		95	5.000	Physical Education 12					
Spanish IV		87	5.000						
Physical Education 11		100	5.000						
Psychology		WP	0.000						
Weighted GPA 92.5714		Credits Earned 35.000		Weighted GPA		Credits Earned 0.000			
GPA Credits Attempted		Total Credits Earned		Weighted GPA					
120.000		115.000		87.7292					
<u>Comments:</u>									
THE GRADES THAT APPEAR ON THE TRANSCRIPT ARE THE ACTUAL GRADES RECEIVED AND DO NOT REFLECT ANY WEIGHTING.									
For the purposes of calculating the student's ACADEMIC GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA):									
1. Students in Advanced Placement (AP) and Syracuse University Project Advance (SUPA) courses receive 5 points.									
2. Students in Honors (H) courses receive 3 points.									
3. Educere is an accredited online provider for courses.									
4. Pass/Fail courses are not included in GPA and credits attempted.									
5. Passing grade changed from 60 to 65 beginning 2009-2010 school year.									
Counselor Counselor, Pat			Date 12/14/2018			School Seal			

Post-Secondary Options

Employment: This option is for students who want to pursue full-time employment upon high school graduation. Our Guidance and Counseling, CST and Senior Options staff will assist students seeking full-time employment.

Apprenticeship/Career/Technical School: Bergen County Technical Schools Adult Education is a viable cost-effective option for post-secondary students in entry-level or apprentice training for electrical, plumbing or HVAC. Career/Technical School is available for students wishing to pursue a career that requires specific technical skills (i.e. building trades, automotive technology, and cosmetology). Counselors can provide students with a list of options.

Military: Students interested in joining one of the branches of the military have several paths: Enlistment, ROTC and Service Academies. Students should speak with their counselor during the early part of junior year to discuss details, timelines and recruitment visits to River Dell.

Gap Year: A gap year is an experiential semester or year typically taken between high school and college in order to deepen practical, professional, and personal awareness. Gap year experiences could include travel, volunteering, or engaging in activities for personal growth. Students choosing to take a gap year will still apply to college during the early part of senior year but will request to defer college enrollment for a year.

Two-year colleges: Students who want to apply to a two-year or “community college” have two paths from which to choose: completing an AA or AS degree and transferring those credits to a four year college or completing a certificate or AAS degree and entering the workforce. Two-year colleges are a good choice if a student did not perform well in high school or if a family is looking for a less expensive college option.

Four-year colleges: Four-year college/universities offer students the opportunity to complete a BA or BS degree. There are many types of institutions including comprehensive universities, liberal arts colleges and specialized programs (technical colleges, conservatories, art schools, etc). The selectivity among 4-year colleges varies greatly: some colleges are highly selective (accepting less than 10% of applicants) and others are less selective (accepting over 50% of applicants). Requirements also vary from college to college. Your counselor can help you shape a list of colleges that is appropriate for you.

Accelerated Programs: Some four-year colleges offer accelerated programs including a 5-year Masters Degree, a 7-year Medical or Pharm D. Program, and joint degree programs (3+2 engineering, 3+3 law, plus a variety of health science options). Typically, accelerated programs are extremely selective so students should talk to their counselor to see if this is an appropriate option.

College Research

"Too many families act as though they must find the one right school. But you're not looking for a needle in a haystack. That will make you crazy. You're searching for a school where you'll do well and be happy, and there are probably dozens of schools like that for each applicant. Most people who put in the time and effort to make an informed decision are going to have a good outcome."

Gary Ripple, former Dean of Admissions at Lafayette College, Money Magazine, 1990

With over 3,000 post-secondary institutions in the United States alone, researching your options can be a daunting task. Below is a list of options to assist with the research portion of this process.

Guidebooks: Guidebooks fall into two main categories: objective/comparative guides and subjective/ranking guides. The first type includes such books as those published by Peterson's, Barron's, and College Board. Most of the information included in these guides was obtained directly from admission offices. They provide quick-reference information and a lot of statistics. Be careful! Statistics can be manipulated to suit the needs of the person or institution presenting them. The subjective guides include those by Fiske, Ruggs, and Princeton Review. When reading these guides and reviewing the manner in which they rate various aspects of the institutions they are discussing, *keep in mind that you are reading the opinions of only a few people*. On the other hand, it is possible to read several such descriptions and put together a good idea of what life at the school might be like.

Internet: Most colleges and universities have home pages on the Internet. What you will find on the pages will vary greatly from college to college, but typically you will find the most current and detailed information available about the school and its application procedures. Now more than ever, many schools offer virtual tours and allow you to apply electronically to the institution. Most sites have some sort of e-mail link to communicate directly with the admission office. A list of other useful websites is included at the end of this guide.

Naviance: If you like numbers, you will probably enjoy looking through a website which contains the admissions history of recent graduates of your high school at popular colleges and universities. The information is presented not by the name of each student, but by his/her GPA and test scores. The information allows you to assess how realistic a school might be for you based on these numbers. Much more information on Naviance is provided later in this guide.

College fairs: The National Association of College Admission Counselors sponsors large college fairs around the country which bring together representatives from a few hundred colleges. Information on these fairs may be posted in the Guidance and Counseling office or on the bulletin board directly outside (across from the library). Local high schools and Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck host annual college fairs. These fairs are good forums for you to talk briefly with the representatives, pick up literature, and put your name on their mailing lists.

College representative visits at RDHS: These presentations are a convenient way to establish contact with an admission office and to learn more about the school and its application procedures from someone working there. The meetings are also a good chance to learn more about schools that may have "fallen under your radar." In some cases these representatives will be one of the people reading the applications from River Dell, and contributing to the decisions made by the admission office. It is definitely to your advantage if that person gets to know us as an institution, and you as a person, rather than as just another application.

Prior to researching schools, you may want to create a list of questions, which you will answer for each college that you investigate. Such questions could include:

Admission

1. How selective is the college? Realistically, what are your chances of getting in?
2. Will the work be challenging or too easy? Is it a grind school? A party school?
3. Financial Aid – what kinds of aid are offered?
4. What will it cost, including tuition, fees, room and board, transportation, travel to and from campus, pocket money?

Physical Environment

5. Is the location rural, suburban or urban? How far from home? How will you get to and from school for break?
6. How many students attend? Do students primarily live on campus or is there a large commuter population?
7. Is campus housing available and guaranteed for all four years? Can you choose coed or single sex dorms?
8. Safety: Are the dorms secure? Is there a security service at night to walk/drive students back to their dorms?
9. Facilities: Are there adequate sports and recreational facilities? Music, art, drama? Where do students eat? What meal plans are offered? Do any of these services cost additional money?

Academic Environment

10. Quality of programs: What are the strengths and weaknesses?
11. Does the college offer academic programs in which you are interested?
12. Faculty: Do students have access to faculty? Do all professors teach undergraduates? How many classes are taught by teaching assistants? What is the largest class size?
13. Curriculum: Is there a core curriculum? How much freedom do you have in course selection? What courses must you take to satisfy requirements?
14. Library: What are their hours? Is it fully computerized and tied to a larger network?
15. Computers: Are computers required of freshmen? What kind of computer facilities exist on campus?
16. Advanced Placement/Dual Enrollment: Does the school accept AP/SUPA/BCC credits? What scores/grades?
17. Honors Programs: Is one available? Who is eligible? Automatic consideration or separate application?
18. Study Abroad: Is it offered? Is there a cost difference, as compared to staying on campus? Is studying abroad available for all majors?
19. Internships: What is available? Do any of them pay a salary/stipend? Are internships required?
20. Graduation Rates: What percentage of students graduate? How long does it take most students to graduate?
21. Retention Rates: What percentage of students return for their sophomore year?
22. Graduate School: What percentage of students go on to graduate or professional schools? What percentage are accepted to the school of their choice?
23. Career Opportunities: How many graduates go directly into the marketplace? Is there a helpful career services office?

Student Environment

24. Student Body: How would you describe a “typical” student? What is the male/female ratio?
25. Geographical Diversity: Is the college regional, or does it attract students from all over the US? Are there international students?
26. Ethnic Diversity: What percentage of students are considered students of color? How well does the institution address issues that concern students of color?
27. Athletic Programs: In which division does the college compete? Are there equally strong programs for men and women? Does the school offer a variety of intercollegiate and intramural sports programs?
28. Social Life: Is there a wide range of social activities? What do students do on a typical Saturday night? Or Wednesday night? How important are fraternities and sororities?

Campus Visits

Before you hit the road to visit colleges/universities that you are interested in, we recommend that you explore the website for each college/university that you plan to visit.

A College/University's website will include:

- General information
- Admissions requirements
- Deadlines
- Up to date information about available majors and minors
- Virtual tours

Students can register for tours, information sessions, and/or open houses in the admissions section of the college/university's website. Keep in mind that each college/university has their own schedule for offering tours and information sessions so check their availability prior to heading to visit.

We highly recommend that students visit each college/university that they plan to apply to, when possible. Not only will this allow each student to get a feel for the campus culture and see if it is a "good fit," but colleges/universities also track student interest and visiting is a big way to demonstrate interest.

In addition to traditional visits, Open Houses are typically offered two times per year at each college/university. Once in the fall and once in the spring. Open houses allow for students and their families to learn a great deal more about the college/university, hear from professors, learn about special programming, etc. If a student is very interested in attending a certain college/university open houses are a great opportunity!

Some visit tips:

- Dress appropriately (with the weather in mind) and wear comfortable shoes
- Visit when school is in session
- Check out the surrounding area, outside of the campus
- Dedicate at least half of a day to each visit
- Talk with students (other than your tour guide)
- Be prepared with questions that are relevant and important to you
- Don't be afraid to ask to see facilities that were not part of the tour
- Jot down your impressions and important points immediately following your visit

Self Reflection

Throughout this process, students spend a great amount of time gathering information specific to the colleges, often forgetting the importance of gathering information about themselves. When considering the qualities that students are looking for in a school, it is essential to consider the learning style, personality, goals, values, and interests. Essentially, students must consider what type of environment they will be able to thrive in: academically, socially, and personally!

Neviance offers a number of assessments, ranging from learning style inventories to more typical personality tests. Below are a few questions that students can also consider as they move through this process in an effort to better direct their search:

- What do you want in an education? Why do you want to go to college?
- What kinds of surroundings are essential to your well-being? Are there certain places, activities, particular terrains, or weather conditions that make you happy? Do you prefer a fast-paced environment where something is happening most of the time? An organized environment where you can join a wide variety of planned activities? A more serene and relaxed environment where you can go your own way?
- What degree of academic challenge is best for you? What balance of study, activities, and social life suits you best? How interested are you in the substance of intellectual life: books, ideas, issues, and discussions? Do you want an academic program where you must work and think hard or one where you can make respectable grades without knocking yourself out? Is it important to you to be at the top of your class, or would you be satisfied to be in the middle or bottom of your college class? How well do you respond to academic pressure and competition from others?
- How important to you is contact with faculty? Do you enjoy interacting and speaking with your River Dell faculty outside the classroom? Do you like a lot of attention from faculty? Do you like lively classroom discussions in which you are an active participant, or do you prefer the idea of being more anonymous in large lectures? How would it feel if your teachers did not know your name?
- How do you want to grow and change in the next few years? What kind of environment would stimulate or inhibit the growth you would like to see?
- What interests do you want to pursue in college? Do your interests require any special facilities, programs, or opportunities? Consider all of your interests, such as fields of study, activities, community and cultural opportunities. Are you more interested in career preparation, technical training or general knowledge and skills of inquisitive thinking?
- How would you enjoy living in a different part of the country? How often do you want to be able to go home? What kind of changes in your lifestyle and perspective might be exciting? Or distressing and overwhelming?
- Where would your family like to see you go to school? What kinds of financial considerations exist?
- What amount of risk do you want to assume in your selection of schools? How will you feel about yourself if you are rejected at one or more of your top choices? How do you plan to select your colleges so that you set yourself up for success?

Building Your List

As you formulate your list of colleges, remember the Golden Rule of the college admissions process: ***Never apply to a college that you would not gladly attend, if offered the choice.***

Once you have gathered information on the colleges/universities that you are interested in, visited each campus, and done some self reflection, you are now ready to build your college list! It is recommended that you finalize your list of colleges the summer before senior year.

Ultimately, as each student is different so will be their college admission process as well as their final list of colleges/universities. We recommend that you apply to anywhere from 6-10 schools, keeping in mind that you may be applying to more than 10 if you are seeking admission for a competitive major (ex: Nursing, Engineering). Your list should include:

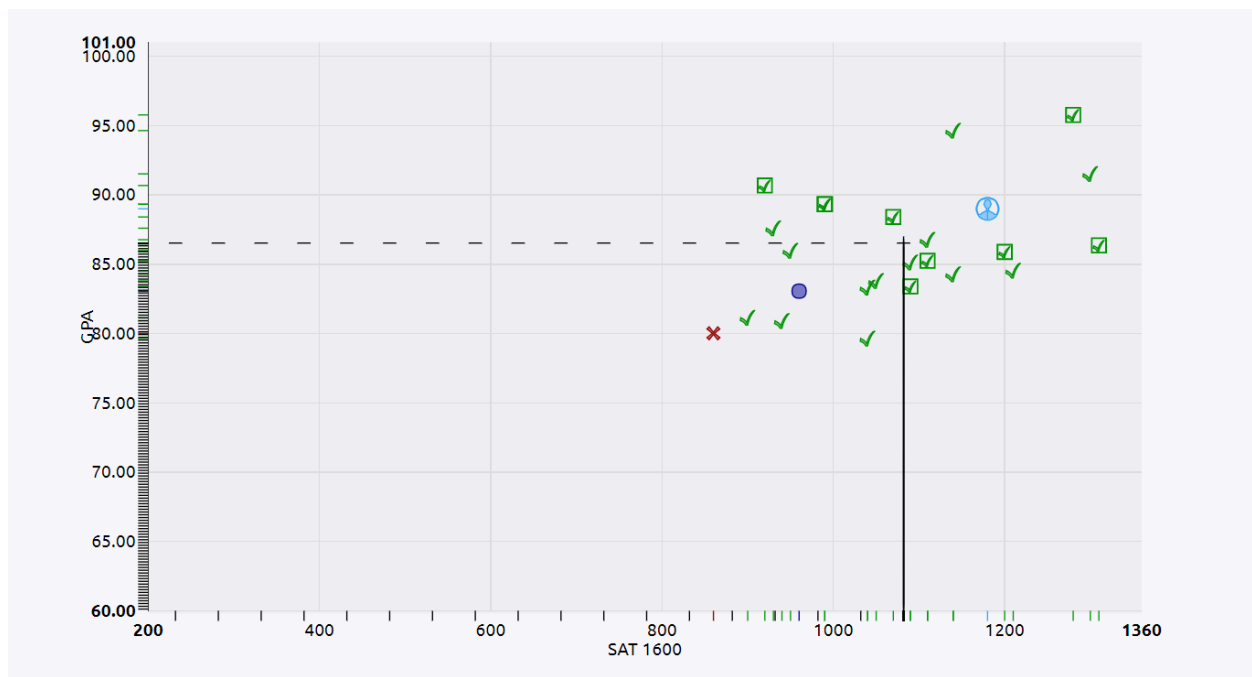
2-3 "Safety" Schools - Schools where you are exceeding GPA and test score averages

3-4 "Target" Schools - Schools where you are meeting GPA and test score averages

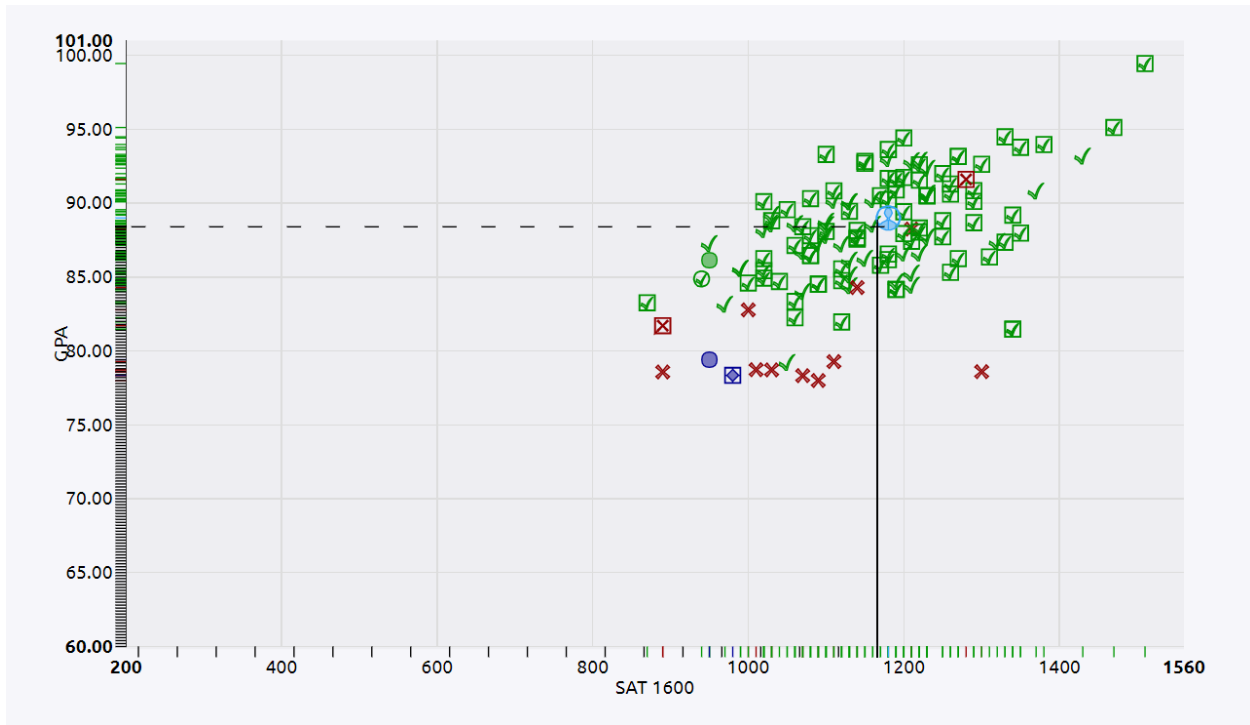
2-3 "Reach" Schools - Schools where you are within the range of admissibility, but on the lower end of GPA and test score ranges

Following are examples of safety, target, and reach schools as they would appear on the Naviance scattergrams. ***Please note that Naviance includes test scores regardless of whether those were submitted for consideration for admission.***

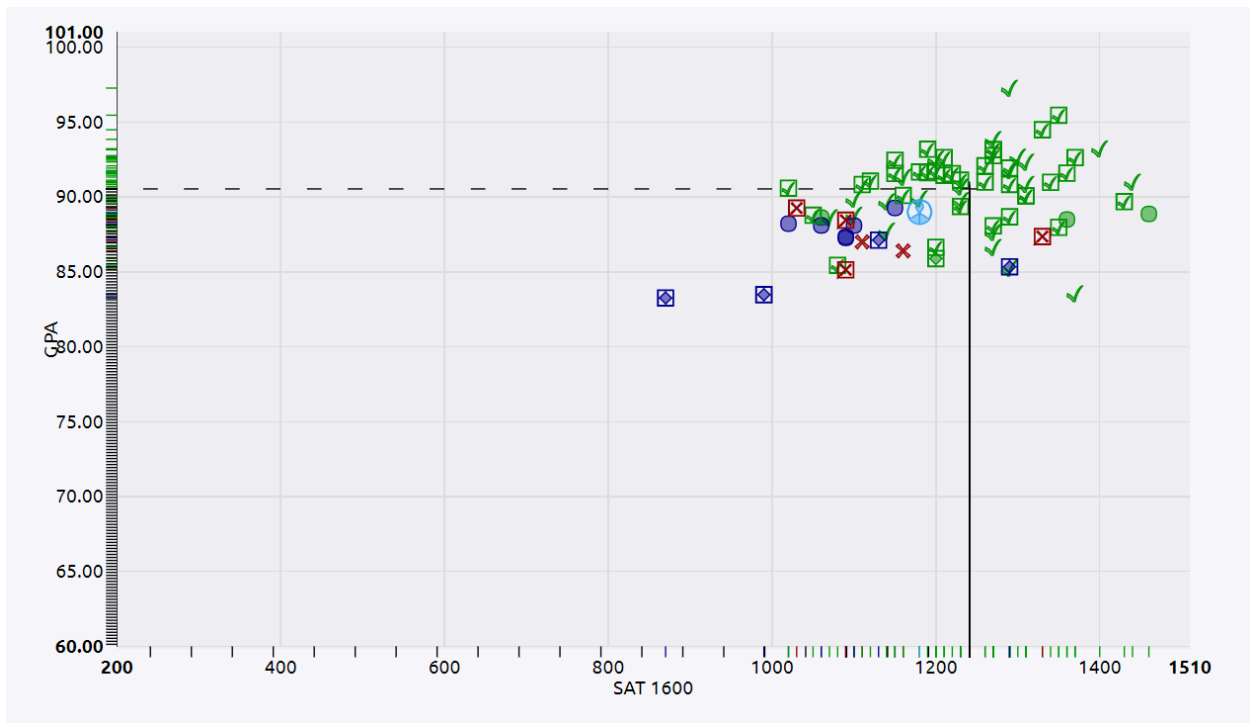
Safety:



Target:



Reach:



****Keep in mind that intended major may impact what category the college/university falls into for you personally****

The Admissions Process

More often than not, college admissions counselors will take a holistic view of a student's overall profile, placing the most emphasis on his or her academic record. Below are the documents/items that can be evaluated as part of the admissions process:

1. Student transcript
 - a. The most important document used during the evaluation process
 - b. Includes students' GPA, courses and grades
 - i. Some colleges may elect to recalculate your GPA
 - c. The scope, sequence and level of difficulty of each course taken
 - d. Schools will look for students to appropriately challenge themselves. While all four years matter, your performance during the latter years will likely be viewed as more reflective of your future performance in college.
2. SAT and/or ACT scores (if submitted). ***With an increase in the number of schools remaining test score optional after 2020, the decision whether or not to submit test scores is an individual one and should be discussed with your students counselor.***
3. Essays
 - a. One main essay will be required, minimum
 - b. Some colleges/universities will require multiple essays/short answer questions to be submitted as part of the application (known as supplements)
4. Resume
 - a. Students will list their extracurricular activities on their application
 - b. Some colleges will permit you to upload a copy of your resume
5. Letters of recommendation
 - a. School counselors will automatically write a letter of recommendation
 - b. Students will speak with teacher(s) in person to request a letter of recommendation at the end of marking period 4, junior year
6. Supplemental Materials
 - a. Students applying to programs in the arts will likely need to provide additional materials i.e.: portfolio, audition footage, etc.
7. Demonstrated Interest
 - a. Colleges/Universities may track student interest and attendance at their events, tours, and information sessions. It is important to show that you are taking an active role in your own admissions process.

Testing

In January 2021, the SAT not only discontinued their subject-specific tests, but also the optional essay component. The ACT still offers an *optional* essay. Please note that very few colleges require the optional essay (on the ACT) for admission consideration. In addition to this recent difference between the two tests, please refer to the chart below for a side-by-side comparison. We recommend that you speak to your counselor about which test may be best for you and set-up a testing plan.

**Students who receive free/reduced lunch should see their counselor for a fee waiver*

SAT	ACT
3 hours (optional essay recently discontinued)	2 hours, 55 minutes + 40-minute essay (optional)
3 tests <i>Reading, Writing/Language, & Math</i>	4 tests + optional essay <i>Reading, English, Math, & Science</i>
Composite score: 400-1600	Composite score: 1-36 & Writing score: 1-36 STEM Score: 1-36 (Math & Science) ELA Score: 1-36 (Reading, English, Writing)
Includes formula sheet for math section Includes no-calculator math section Questions increase in difficulty as you progress (reading, writing, and math)	No formulas provided—formulas should be memorized May use calculator for all math Question ordering is random
Number of questions: 154 Time per question: 1:10	Number of questions: 215 Time per question: 0:49

Comparing your SAT score to your ACT score

The following abbreviated table can be used to compare scores between the two tests. A full concordance table is available on the [College Board website](#).

SAT Score	ACT Score	SAT Score	ACT Score
1600	36	1180	24
1540	34	1110	22
1470	32	1030	20
1400	30	950	18
1320	28	870	16
1260	26	780	14

College Timeline

January/February

Junior Year

- Families attend the Junior Post-Secondary Planning Night
- Families meet individually with school counselor to begin planning for post-secondary options and discuss senior schedule and extracurricular activities
- Discuss possible summer enrichment, community service, and leadership programs/opportunities with your school counselor
- Begin planning a standardized test schedule that provides ample time to prepare and take SAT and/or ACT
- **ACT Exam (February)**
- Upon completion of MP2, transcripts will be updated to reflect mid-year GPAs
- Begin researching colleges on the internet & guide books and plan college visits
- Begin attending information sessions and open houses at colleges during winter break and on weekends
- Continue to work hard and present the best transcript possible to colleges
- Artists and Media Students should begin discussing and developing portfolios-STARTING IN THE FALL WILL NOT BE ENOUGH TIME. Also note that just because you are not applying to art school or art programs, does not mean that you cannot develop a portfolio to submit as part of your application.

March/April

- Request information from colleges
- Meet with your school counselor to continue talking about your prospective college list and plan college visits
- Spring Break--Visit Colleges
- Meet with your counselor to choose an appropriately challenging senior schedule
- Division I & II Athletes-Sign up with NCAA Clearinghouse & get NCAA Guide
- Finalize summer enrichment/service/leadership/employment plans
- **SAT Exam (March)**
- **ACT Exam (April)**
- Visit College Fairs

May

- **SAT**
- Attend College Round Table at River Dell High School and visit college fairs
- Speak to two teachers of academic subjects to discuss college recommendations
- Continue to visit colleges and update "Colleges I'm Thinking About" on Naviance

June

- **Prepare and submit Senior Questionnaire (Naviance), Parent Brag Sheet (Online Form), and Resume. DUE IN COUNSELING OFFICE the first week of June!**
- SAT Exam
- ACT Exam
- Counselors to meet with students to begin their Common App and provide a summer checklist
- Review your 3-year high school transcript and notify your counselor of any possible errors
- Begin writing and revising your Common App Essay in your 11th grade English class (Make use of this time! Teachers may not be available to assist you in the fall)
 - Make sure you talk with your school counselor about any possible changes to the writing prompts!
- Have a strong list of 6-10 schools that you have carefully researched and have thoughtful reasons as to why you would apply by the time you leave for summer
 - Make sure this list covers all three categories: safety, target, and reach
- ***If you are considering applying test-optional, some colleges require a graded paper. Keep one or two of your best graded essays in the event this is required in lieu of sending test scores.***

Summer Going into Senior Year

- ACT Exam
- Fill your summer with experiences that stimulate and refresh you, as well as those which reflect your interests, skills and ways you plan to grow
- August 1st - Common Application can be rolled over for rising seniors at <http://www.commonapp.org>. Students should begin adding any senior specific information to their Common App and create their own list of additional supplemental essays they will be asked to complete.
- Keep visiting schools, collecting information on applications, and discussing your college choices with your family. Start moving colleges into "Colleges I'm Applying To" on Naviance.
- SAT I
- Gather materials that support your strengths and work on your college essay
 - At minimum, students should have a strong rough draft ready when they return senior year
- Attend College Essay Writing & Common App Activities Workshop (registration information shared in June)

September

Senior Year

- ACT Exam
- Attend your senior group meeting to continue the college process
- Reapply for Free/Reduced Lunch if you qualified last year and believe you still qualify

-
- Meet with college representatives visiting RDHS
 - Check your email and the "Colleges" tab of Naviance for specifics and to register
 - Finalize your Common App essay and continue with school specific supplements
 - Confirm with teachers about recommendations and give teachers any remaining forms if applicable, as well as a formal Naviance request
 - **Be sure to give your teachers a minimum of 3-4 weeks to write your letter of recommendation**
 - **DO NOT REQUEST RECOMMENDERS THROUGH COMMON APP**
 - Discuss whether or not you are applying test-optional to certain colleges with your school counselor and gather any additional items requested by the school for applying this way
 - **Begin sending test scores to colleges, if you are finished with your standardized testing** www.collegeboard.org; <http://www.act.org>
 - Test scores can take up to 8 weeks to process on the college's end, so consider this in your timeline.
 - Begin to file Rolling Admission and Early Action/Decision applications
 - Register for CSS Profile (Financial Aid Profile) if necessary at <https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>
 - A list of schools requiring this form can be found here as well
 - Register for FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>
 - Notify your counselor and teachers ASAP on any early deadlines you are expecting to meet. If you wish to apply to early deadlines, make it a priority to meet with your counselor early in September. Update "Colleges I'm Applying To" on Naviance.
 - **Submit Transcript Request Form(s) a minimum of 10 school days prior to your deadlines! Forms are available in Guidance.**

October

- ACT, SAT
- October 15th - Popular deadline for some of the Southern schools
- Attend Financial Aid Night at River Dell High School
- Continue and submit CSS Profile
- Finish November 1st Early Decision, Early Action, and Priority Applications
- Continue to keep your grades up, they matter!
 - Keep in mind that some schools may request to see your first marking period grades prior to making a decision on your application

November

- November 1st - ED/EA/PRIORITY DEADLINE FOR MANY COLLEGES
- Mid-November-End of Marking Period 1. When you receive your MP1 grades, talk to your counselor to determine whether you want these grades submitted to schools you have and/or will apply to

-
- Some schools may require MP1 grades. If your school requires MP1 grades, please email your counselor and request that grades are sent.
 - **November 15th - ED/EA/PRIORITY DEADLINE FOR MANY COLLEGES**
 - Make sure that you have submitted the CSS Profile and FAFSA to any college or university you have applied October 15/November 1/November 15 that requires it
 - Continue filing Rolling and Regular Decision applications
 - Notify your counselor if you are interested in attending the Bergen Community Instant Decision Day (typically held in early January)

December

- **December 1st - Final ED/EA Deadline for most schools**
- **December 15-31st - Notification date for most schools with ED/EA/Priority deadlines**
 - Update Naviance and your counselor on all decisions
 - Set up a meeting with your counselor if you were deferred or waitlisted to discuss a plan for moving forward
- FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) opens for submission. FAFSA can be submitted on Oct. 1st using prior year tax returns <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>
- Finish Rolling and Regular Admission Applications
- Finish your applications before break and use the rest of December to relax, regroup, and prepare for the remainder of senior year
- **Holiday Recess-Students should notify counselors well in advance of any deadlines or materials needed for applications. Counselors will not be available over break**
- Check email for outside scholarship opportunities forwarded from Mrs. Obeso
- Create accounts on applicant portals once your application is submitted

January

- Check email and application portals to monitor potential missing items or updates
- Update Naviance and counselor with admissions decisions
- Schedule appointments with counselor to discuss deferrals and/or any additional colleges you plan to apply to

February/March

- Review River Dell Local Scholarship packet from Mrs. Obeso
 - The scholarship packet will be sent via email and also posted on the River Dell Guidance and Counseling Website.
- Scholarship applications are due at the end of March
- Students who have submitted an SRAR must update that with mid-year grades

May

- Submit enrollment deposit by May 1st to **one** college/university.

Time to Apply

Ready to apply? Be sure to follow the steps below:

- Finalize your list of schools--check with your counselor to make sure your list is balanced--and make sure all schools are in Naviance with accurate deadlines and submission types
- Pay careful attention to Priority deadlines or unique deadlines for specific majors, such as Art, Music, Engineering and Nursing
 - Be sure to reference the *college/university's website* for these
- Make sure all necessary test scores are sent **(by student)** officially through College Board (SAT) or ACT
- Finalize your applications and check in with your counselor
- Follow up with your teachers to make sure they are aware of deadlines
- **Submit a Transcript Request Form, one for each school, a minimum of 10 school days prior to your deadlines**
 - You should also request transcripts on Naviance, under the "Colleges I'm Applying to Tab" and "Request Transcripts"
 - This will allow you to view when materials are sent
- Print preview your application prior to submitting--check carefully for errors

A few reminders

- We do not rank. If a school asks for rank, indicate as such.
- Most schools that require a Self-Reporting Academic Record (SRAR), such as Rutgers and the UT schools, will not allow you to submit (or in some cases even access) that until *after* you submit your general application
- You can (and in many cases should) submit your application prior to your test scores and/or school documents arriving (transcript, secondary school report, school profile, and recommendations)
- It is your responsibility to monitor all deadlines and requirements and make appropriate, timely requests
- Test scores can take a few weeks to arrive electronically--make sure you allot time for this! **It is your responsibility to send test scores.**
- Don't be afraid to contact admissions with questions that are not easily answered by carefully reviewing their website
- **Be sure to check your email frequently--this is how your counselors and colleges will be communicating with you regarding your applications**

After You Apply

Check Your Email: Once you have applied, you will likely receive an email from a college or university confirming they have received your application. They might also provide a link where you can create an applicant portal and view a checklist of required materials needed for your application to be complete and ready for review. Follow up with teachers and your counselor if you have outstanding materials listed in this area. Although many schools are updating these portals in real time, others can still take several weeks to update.

Common App: Once you have submitted an application, there should be green check marks next to each required item of the corresponding school on the **“Dashboard”** section of your Common App. This will indicate that everything required for this school is complete. When your teachers and counselor have submitted your school materials, it will be reflected in Common App under the **“FERPA and Recommenders”** area of each corresponding school.

- If a school requires submission of supplemental writing section, make sure you have also sent this item. It must be submitted separately from the main application to the school and both must be sent in order for your application to be considered complete.

Naviance: In Naviance, the **“Office Status”** column in your **“Colleges I’m Applying To”** section will change from **“Pending”** to **“Initial Materials Submitted.”**

Deferred: Students applying for early deadlines might be Deferred to the Regular Admissions pool. This means that the admissions committee is not ready to make a decision for a number of reasons. See your counselor as soon as possible if you are deferred to discuss how to move forward.

- If a school has provided instructions in your deferral letter, follow them. If they want 1st marking period grades, send them. If they instruct you not to contact them or provide additional supporting material, do not send them anything.

Waitlist: Students are put on the Waitlist at a college when the institution believes they are a good fit, but does not have any more room to admit them. Make sure you talk to your counselor about this decision ASAP when you receive it.

- Every school operates their Waitlist differently. Some schools take a number of students from this list while others might not take any.
- You will be provided instructions on how to tell a school whether or not you want to remain on their Waitlist.
- If you stay on the Waitlist, place a deposit at another college or university and move on as if you are attending that other school.

Mid-year grades: Your GPA and transcript will be updated after first semester of senior year with an average of first and second marking period. These transcripts are automatically sent to schools you have applied to. If you have questions or concerns about this, see your counselor.

Local scholarship apps: Many local organizations offer scholarship opportunities for River Dell seniors. This process begins in February of senior year. Mrs. Obeso will be sending out emails regarding these opportunities--another reason to check your emails regularly!

May 1st deposit date: This is the deadline to submit a deposit to the college or university you wish to attend, holding your spot at that institution. You should be placing a deposit at only **one** school.

Financial Aid

The majority of students will need financial aid in order to attend college. There are a variety of ways for students and their families to obtain financial support to make college more affordable. Regardless of whether or not you feel you and your family will qualify for financial aid, we recommend that you still fill out and submit the FAFSA. Some colleges will utilize FAFSA information for merit aid.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The FAFSA is a free application students and their families fill out in order to be eligible to receive financial aid from the government. The type and amount of aid or loans is based solely on your family income. More information can be found at <https://studentaid.gov/>. The FAFSA can be located at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>.

CSS Profile

The CSS Profile is a separate application document required by some colleges/universities. Please visit <https://profile.collegeboard.org/profile/ppi/participatingInstitutions.aspx> to see if there is a college/university on your list that requires it. You can create an account and access the actual CSS Profile application here: <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>.

Merit Scholarships

When a student exceeds the admissions requirements at a college/university, they may be eligible for merit scholarships; money they are granted and will not be required to pay back. Each college/university has their own particular requirements and processes for granting merit aid. While in most circumstances you will automatically be considered for merit aid, there are some instances where you will need to submit a separate application for merit scholarship consideration.

Other Scholarships

There are a variety of national, state, and local scholarships for students available. Students should keep on top of their email during their senior year as this is the method these scholarships are communicated. Please refer to the resources page for helpful links.

River Dell Local Scholarships: The opportunity to apply for local scholarships will become available early in the second semester, senior year. Students will be instructed to visit the Guidance and Counseling webpage where they can read through the different scholarship options and learn how to apply. <https://rdhs.riverdell.org/guidance>

EOF/EOP: The New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) provides support to those students who come from an educationally and economically disadvantaged background and plan on attending college in the state of New Jersey. The aid from this state fund supports the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), which helps low-income New Jersey residents to attend college. Students who are admitted into this program have demonstrated academic readiness and potential, a desire to do well in their studies, and financial need. http://www.nj.gov/highereducation/EOF/EOF_Eligibility.shtml

NJ Stars & NJ Stars II: NJ Stars is a scholarship program for New Jersey residents that covers the cost of tuition at New Jersey's 19 community colleges. In order to be eligible students must rank in the top 15% of their high school class at the end of either their junior or senior year, take a challenging course schedule, and obtain a 450 or better on the Evidence-based Reading and Writing (ERW) and 500 or better on the Math portions of the SAT (or ACT equivalent). NJ Stars II is a program that can help students earn scholarship rewards towards their bachelor's degrees. To qualify, students must earn an associate's degree with a 3.25 GPA or higher. Students whose family income exceeds \$250,000 are not eligible. <https://www.hesaa.org/Pages/NJGrantsApplications.aspx>

QuestBridge: QuestBridge National College Match is a college and scholarship application program that helps outstanding low-income high school seniors gain admission and *full four-year scholarships* to the nation's most selective colleges.

Who Should Apply? Criteria includes: primarily A's in the most rigorous level courses, top 10% of graduating class, SAT/PSAT score of at least 1310 or an ACT score of at least 28, and evidence of strong writing ability, intellectual spark, and determination through essays and teacher/counselor recommendations. Most students are from families earning less than \$65,000/year for a family of four, with personal circumstances (77% of finalists are the first in their family to go to college, students with an unusual level of responsibility, accomplishments/leadership in extracurricular activities). <https://www.questbridge.org/>

Special Considerations for Students with Disabilities

Support varies greatly from college to college, with some schools offering highly comprehensive programs/services and others that are more limited. Schools with comprehensive programs may require a separate application and a copy of current documents (current IEP, updated testing, etc.). Other schools will require that documentation is submitted following admission notification. Regardless, it is important to realize that IEPs terminate upon high school graduation and students will need to apply for accommodations through a 504 plan at the college level.

We highly recommend that any student interested in continuing services at the college level make it a point to research services at each school and visit the Office of Disabilities Support Services during a college visit, before or after admission acceptance. Once admitted, schedule a time to meet with a representative from that office to discuss potential services available, potential additional fees, and the application process. A student's counselor and/or case manager can provide a list of important questions to ask during that meeting.

Testing Accommodations

Students who have approved accommodations at RDHS (IEP or 504) *may* be eligible for testing accommodations on the SAT and/or ACT

- SAT accommodation requests must be submitted *prior* to test registration
- ACT accommodation requests are submitted *after* test registration
 - Indicate at time of registration that accommodations are requested
 - Student and parent must complete signature portion of request, providing school permission to release educational testing
- The approval process can take up to 2 months
- For more information, speak with your school counselor

A special note about disability disclosure

Unless applying into a specialized program within a college, admissions will not know whether or not a student has a disability. With that said, some students elect to write about their disability and overcoming related challenges as part of their personal essay. Please note, it is the choice of the student as to whether or not to disclose this information. *By law, colleges cannot ask students to disclose disabilities, nor can they use a student's disability as a reason for denial or acceptance.*

For more information, visit:

<https://rdhs.riverdell.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=8717464&pageId=9882395>

High School & College Athletics

NJSIAA Eligibility Rules for Senior Student-Athletes (High School)

- 30 credits must be obtained during Junior year in order to be eligible to participate in a fall sport as a senior
- 15 credits must be obtained in the first semester of senior year or students **must pass** all courses, if enrolled in less than 15 credits, to be eligible to participate in a spring sport. Withdraw Failing (WF) from courses will render a student ineligible.

College Athletics

- Student-athletes intending to play NCAA Division I or II sports must register with the NCAA
 - <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>
- Student-athletes must complete 16 core courses and certain GPA and test score requirements in order to meet NCAA requirements (Division I & II only)
 - A list of River Dell Courses approved by the NCAA are listed in the program of studies, but can also be viewed online at:
 - <https://web3.ncaa.org/hsportal/exec/hsAction?hsActionSubmit=searchHighSchool>
- Student-athletes will learn of initial eligibility following the submission of final junior year transcripts--be sure to sign the NCAA Transcript Release Form and submit this to your counselor before the end of junior year
- In order to be academically eligible for Division III athletics, student-athletes must meet the unique standards of the institution
- NCAA guide for student athletes linked below:
<https://rdhs.riverdell.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=8717464&pageId=9117034>

Glossary

CEEB Code:

Identification numbers assigned to specific organizations and locations (like high schools and colleges/universities), CEEB codes ensure official documents such as test scores, transcripts, and applications go to the right places. Our RDHS CEEB Code is 311054.

Common Application:

An application platform that allows students to fill out their demographic, school, course work, and other general information one time and submit it to multiple schools in lieu of filling out separate applications on each college/university's specific website. Over 800 colleges/universities accept the Common Application. Please visit www.commonapp.org.

CSS Profile:

An additional financial aid form required for only some colleges/universities (mostly private schools) that need additional financial information from students and their families. There is a fee associated with submitting this form, which is also available on October 1st of the student's senior year. Please visit <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>.

Deferred:

Students who apply under Early Action or Early Decision deadlines only may or may not receive notification that they have been deferred to Regular Admission/Regular Decision. This means that the college would like to see more academic information from your senior year, such as your mid-year grades (average of first and second marking period).

Early Action:

Early Action (EA) plans are non-binding. This application deadline can be more competitive, but will provide students with an earlier notification of admission. Under Early Action, you may apply to as many other colleges/universities under their early action or regular admission deadlines as you would like.

Early Decision:

Early Decision (ED) agreements are binding. When applying you and your parents sign an agreement to attend the college/university if accepted. When deciding whether you would like to apply ED, you should consider whether or not it is a financially feasible option for your family. You may only apply to one college/university ED, but you may apply to as many

schools as you would like through other admission processes (EA, RD, Priority, Rolling). If you are accepted through ED, you must withdraw all other admission applications.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):

A free form produced by the US Department of Education that is required for students seeking financial aid at nearly all US Colleges/Universities. Students and their parents are able to fill this form out beginning October 1st of their senior year, utilizing tax documents from the previous year. Please visit <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>.

Garden State Guarantee

If total gross household income is 65k or below, students may be eligible to attend two years of any state institution for free. Above 65k and below 80k, you can get a 50% discount on tuition.

NJ Fams Account:

NJFAMS is a user-friendly, real-time system that is available for all New Jersey students who apply for NJ State aid for each academic year. Students will need to log in and set up an NJFAMS account. Within 3 - 5 days the FAFSA data is sent to the colleges you listed on your FAFSA and your state grant agency.

<https://njfams.hesaa.org/NJFAMS/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fNJFAMS%2fint%2fFinAid%2findex.aspx>

NJ Smart ID:

Each student, educated in New Jersey, is assigned a unique student identifier in NJ SMART to track that student's history within New Jersey. At RDHS, your NJ Smart ID is located on the top right of your transcript under "State ID Number."

Open Admissions:

Colleges that take any high school graduate until all the openings are filled. The only admissions criteria for open admissions colleges is a high school diploma or GED. Almost all two-year colleges have an open admissions policy.

Priority Deadline:

Directly refers to the date in which a student needs to submit their application in order to receive full consideration for scholarships and/or priority consideration for financial aid. Many state and/or public universities utilize a priority deadline.

Regular Admission/Regular Decision:

Regular Admission/Regular Decision (RD) is the normal process by which students apply by published deadlines (usually in the winter of senior year), with the promise of receiving an admissions decision no later than April 1 of their senior year. A student may apply to as many schools via regular admission/regular decision as they would like.

Restrictive Early Action/Single Choice Early Action:

Restrictive Early Action/Single Choice Early Action is non-binding. Students who opt to apply to a college that offers Restrictive or Single Choice Early Action cannot apply to any other college/university under their Early Action, Restrictive Early Action, Early Decision or Early Notification program. Applicants may apply to as many other colleges and universities under their Regular Decision option only.

Rolling Admission:

Colleges/universities that offer rolling admissions will evaluate a student's application once all of the required materials are received and the application file is complete. Depending on when a student applies in the fall, they will be notified of their admissions decision within anywhere from two weeks (ex: application is submitted at the beginning of the senior year) up to eight weeks (ex: application is submitted in the winter of senior year).

Self-Reporting Academic Record (SRAR):

A list of your courses and associated grades that have been completed or will be completed for high school or college credit. Many large, public schools require that you complete an SRAR rather than accept a transcript from our school. Schools that require a SRAR will verify all information upon receiving your final transcript after graduation.

Waitlisted:

Students who apply under Regular Admission/Regular Decision deadlines may or may not receive notification that they are being offered a place on the college/university's waitlist. This means that the college/university feels the student is a good fit for their school, but do not currently have space in their freshman class to admit them. Students must notify the admissions department at the college/university that they accept their spot on the waitlist.

Naviance & Other Helpful Resources

College Search Websites

- <http://student.naviance.com/riverdell>
 - All River Dell students can log into Naviance using their RD email address
 - Parents do not have a separate username and as such, should log in using their child's username and password
 - Students make use of Naviance throughout high school, with activities ranging from career exploration to resume building to college planning
- <https://rdhs.riverdell.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=8717464&pageId=9104121>
 - The River Dell High School Guidance and Counseling website has a wealth of information taking you through the entire college process
 - You can also follow us on Twitter, where we post college information throughout each year @RDGuidance
- <https://www.collegeboard.org/>
 - In addition to registering for the SATs and sending scores, College Board offers great college information. Students can work through a college search, explore scholarships, or apply for financial aid (CSS Profile).
- <http://www.unigo.com>
 - Another great website allowing students to explore college data and search for scholarships, Unigo also uniquely provides information on internship opportunities, jobs, and thousands of study guides.
- <https://www.fastweb.com/college-scholarships>
 - A scholarship-focused website that allows students to create a profile, indicating their strengths, interests, and skills. Students are instantly matched with national scholarships that align to their profile. Students can then complete applications for each scholarship of interest.
- <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/>
 - A tremendous resource for students, particularly related to college essay writing. A must-visit before tackling personal essays and supplements.
- <https://www.nacacnet.org/globalassets/documents/advocacy-and-ethics/initiatives/steps/2017latehsstepbystep.pdf>
 - A detailed, comprehensive college planning guide put together by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

Recommended Reading

- *College Match: A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School for You* by Steven R. Antonoff, Ph.D
- *Who Gets in and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions* by Jeff Selingo
- *I'm Going to College--Not You* edited by Jennifer Delahunty
- *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be* by Frank Bruni