



**COLLEGE  
APPLICATION  
TOOLKIT**

# Naviance

- Naviance is a college readiness tool that allows students to search for colleges, control their college lists, search data as it pertains to WPHS students and for counselors to send colleges supporting documents
- When you begin to consider a school, put it in your list of “Colleges I’m Thinking About” in Naviance
- When you decide to apply to a school, move it from the “Colleges I’m Thinking About” to the “Colleges I’m Applying To” list in Naviance. (Only schools that you have actually applied to should be in this list. )

# Application Method

- Naviance is a NOT an application tool
- Five ways to apply to colleges (most common for us)
  - Common Application
  - CUNY Portal
  - SUNY Portal
  - Individual college website
  - Coalition Application

# Common Application

- The Common Application and Naviance “speak to other”
  - You will need to “match” the Common Application to Naviance
  - Name on the Common Application **MUST MATCH** your name in our system
  - Waiving your right to see recommendations
  - Indicate Common Application or not in Naviance

# Deadlines

- Student responsibility
- Verify on the college website
- Miss a deadline and you will not be considered, for admission, for financial aid, for housing

*You must allow at least 10 school days for WPHS to process your application, and much more time for a teacher to write you a thoughtful recommendation*

# TYPES OF APPLICATION DEADLINES

- Early Decision-Binding
- Early Action- Non Binding
- Regular Decision
- Rolling
- Early Decision II- Binding

# Timeline

- Earliest deadlines: Mid-October (unusual)
- Common deadlines for EA/ED: November 1, November 15. Regular admission: January 15.

By now you should have:

- Met with your counselor about college planning and developed a preliminary list of schools
- Thought about your college essay/written a rough draft
- Asked your teachers for recommendations
- Taken any tests that your schools require, or registered for the next available test administration

# Thanksgiving “deadline”

Not just the holiday, but what should be doing because you completed the entire college application process by that date!!

We recommend that regardless of whether you are applying rolling admission or regular admission, you set a personal goal of completing the process by Thanksgiving. The earlier you apply, the clearer your interest. Don't wait until the last possible moment.

# Communication

- Email – it's what the colleges use
- Use an appropriate email address
- Check that email daily
- Respond immediately
- If you have concerns, ask us (college sends a notice that they never received . . . )

# Elements of an Application

- Student application
- Essay
- Supplemental Essays\*
- Extracurricular Activities Profile
- Teacher recommendations (2) from core teachers, generally from junior year.\*\*
- Test Scores (ACT/SAT/SAT Subject Tests)

*\*Depending on the college.*

*\*\*Don't wait for teacher recs to send in your application!!*

# WPHS Sends

- Teacher Recommendations
- Counselor Recommendation
- Transcript (initial, midyear and final)
- Secondary School Report
- School Profile
- Etc. (sometimes a school asks us for additional materials for a particular student)

# The Student MUST

- Tell his or her counselor the colleges where they applied BEFORE the deadline
- Send ACT/SAT scores to each college they are applying to. Counselors cannot do this!
- Fill out and submit Transcript Request Form immediately following applying to a college
- **If you are applying EARLY ACTION or EARLY DECISION let your counselor know ASAP**

# College Essay

- It could only have been written by you/about you
- Avoid clichés (How I saved the big game; The exact moment I decided I had to . . .)
- Make it perfect
- No typos
- Grammatically correct
- Clear and communicative
- But not too perfect (in terms of content and tone)
- It must be in your voice – not your parent, your well-meaning neighbor, or anyone else's voice. Don't let someone extinguish your voice in the process of helping you edit your essay

# Teacher Recommendations

- You get two (2) recs from core classroom teachers (Math, Science, Social Studies, English, World Language)
- Preferably from junior-year teachers (not a hard and fast rule)
- One (1) rec from guidance counselor
- Possibly another rec from a coach, supervisor at job, pastor, etc.

# Teacher Recommendations CON'T

- Teacher Recs
  - Talk about you in the classroom
  - Insights
  - Leadership qualities
  - Interests or Passion
  - Participation in classroom discussions
  - Struggles
- Counselor Recs
  - More about you as a person
  - Citizenship/Behavior
  - Character/Challenges
  - Extracurricular Activities
  - Not just what you do, but what it says about you

# Teacher Recommendations CON'T

- Once a teacher agrees to write a recommendation for you, immediately send a thank you note via Naviance.
- You should fill out a student self-reflection form or brag sheet for your teacher. (If you don't do this, the teacher's recommendation may be more generic than you would hope. Ideally, like your essay, it could only be about you .)

## FERPA

- Under federal law you have the right to access the recommendation submitted on your behalf.
- **We advise that you waive your right of access.** Many college admissions officers will attach more weight to a confidential recommendation because they then know that the recommendation they are reading is more likely to be completely candid.
- Please note that your decision about whether or not to waive your right will be visible to your recommender on the recommendation form. You will not be penalized for declining to waive your right.

# College Testing

- Not all schools require them (test optional)
- You don't always have to send them all (score choice)
- Seniors: If you haven't already taken at least one SAT/ACT, register immediately

# Sending Scores to Colleges

It is up to you to contact the College Board or ACT directly to have them send your scores to colleges. We cannot send your scores.

# Other

- Demonstrate interest\*
- Visit schools and bring along a friend – or two
- Attend college fairs
- Attend college visits at the HS (You will receive notifications if you list your schools in Naviance)

*\*Students, not parents . . .*

# Take Advantage of Resources

- Guidance Bulletins
- Guidance Website
- Evening Guidance Presentations
- Naviance, Collegeboard, etc.
- And most importantly:

Your child's guidance counselor!

# You Got In! Now What?

## Factors in deciding which school to attend when faced with a choice:

- Retention rate
- Graduation rate
- Financial aid package
- Quality/reputation of program you are interested in (if you already know your intended major)
- FIT!

# Details . . .

- As soon as you hear of a school's decision, put that information in Naviance
- As soon as you have decided which school you will attend, put that information in Naviance

# Parents – This One's for You

Please go onto Naviance (if you haven't yet created a Naviance account, please ask for your login code so that you can do this right away) and fill out the WPHS Parent Senior Brag Sheet Questionnaire.

It helps us see your child from your perspective and this additional dimension can be very valuable to us when writing your child's letter of recommendation.

## Also...

Please encourage your child to go onto Naviance and complete the Scholarship and Awards Survey. Even if your child completed it as a junior, please have him/her complete it again as a senior. Last year's results will not apply.

*Why do we ask this?*

## The Fine Line Between Excitement and Terror

If you are organized, work with your counselor, set goals along the way and work systematically to complete your college applications, the process can be exciting. Maybe a bit stressful, but manageable.

If you wait until the last minute and are writing your college essays on January 14th when the application deadline is the 15th, it can be terrifying.

Aim for exciting. Get organized and get moving.