

Junior College and Curriculum Night

Sponsored by the BHS Guidance Department

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The College Admissions Process

Topics to be discussed:

- PLANNING
- PREPARING
- SEARCHING
- APPLYING

Planning

- Course selection
- Extracurricular activities
 - Enrichment
- Standardized tests

Course Selection

- Create a schedule with balance.
- Consider requesting to have a study hall in your schedule if you think you might need one.
- Courses should be challenging, but not impossible.
- Take teacher recommendations seriously. They know the content and the level of expectation.
- Colleges will look at a student's transcript within the context of our school profile.
- They also will look to see progress.
- Choose electives based on strengths, areas of interest and those that show a desire to learn more about a particular topic and with the intention of learning more about an area as a possible major or career path.

Extracurricular Activities

- Why are they so important?
 - Provide opportunities for growth
 - Show areas of interest
 - Provide opportunities for leadership
 - Allow students to shine in areas that may not be apparent on a transcript
 - Allow students to show passion, dedication and commitment
 - Provide opportunities for positive contributions to school and community
 - Show development of special skills outside the classroom

Enrichment

- Go beyond what is available at school
 - Employment
 - Volunteer work (beyond graduation requirement)
 - Giving back to the community
 - Gaining different perspectives
 - Working with different people, or sets of circumstances
 - Summer enrichment
 - Take a different course, or try something new
 - Spend some time in a different community
 - Take a college level course
 - Travel

SAT/ACT: How do I know which test to take?

- Colleges will accept scores from either the SAT or the ACT
- PSAT (practice SAT) was administered to all juniors at BHS in October
- Familiarize yourself with the differences between SAT and ACT
- Take practice tests (online, in prep books)
- Talk to your counselor about other opportunities to compare tests/practice

Should I take both?

- Not necessary to take both
 - Students should AVOID OVER-TESTING whenever possible
 - Taking both is time consuming and costly
- But it is possible to take both
 - Tests are offered at different times (and often in alternating months)
 - Students can typically choose which scores to send to colleges

SAT Subject Tests

- Specific hour-long tests offered in several different subject areas.
- Few schools require for admission or placement purposes, however they are not required by all schools.
- If a school does require the subject tests, most will require 2, but no more than 3.
- Click [here](#) for a list of schools that require/recommend Subject Tests
- Refer to college's website for details on their testing requirements
- Click [here](#) for additional information regarding the SAT Subject Tests

Test Preparation

- How should I prepare for the test(s)?
 - Practice, practice, practice
 - Take a full-length practice test online
 - [ACT](#)
 - [SAT](#)
 - Check with the colleges that you are interested in, to see if they have any additional or specific requirements.
 - Speak to your counselor about what type of prep
 - Group classes
 - Online classes
 - *College Board has partnered with [Khan Academy](#) to offer free SAT prep
 - *ACT now offers [ACT Academy](#) for free ACT prep
 - Private tutoring
 - Boot camps

AP Tests

- Students enrolled in an AP course are expected to take the [AP Exams](#) in May.
- AP Exams test students' ability to perform at a college level and correspond with the college-level work that was completed in the classroom through the AP course.
- The credit and/or advanced placement that colleges provide students on basis of AP Exam scores varies greatly from one school to the next. Visit college websites for details.
- Students must take the AP exam to receive college credit; participation in the course without the AP Exam will not qualify for credit.

There is no “one size fits all” for testing

- Speak to your counselor
- Speak to your teachers
- Parents and students need to talk about how much time and effort can or should be put into preparation
- Determine your own individual time table for testing. Each student has different commitments at different times. Do what is right for you!
- Testing is only one piece of the admissions criteria. Time is far better spent focusing on current coursework, and extracurricular activities

Preparing

HOW WILL I PREPARE FOR THE
COLLEGE SEARCH/ADMISSIONS
PROCESS?

Preparing for the College Search

- Set the tone
- Discuss your plans, and set some goals
- Meet with your counselor
 - Individualized Junior Conferences scheduled for January & February 2019
- Establish your own time table
- Know yourself and answer some basic questions
- Decide what resources you will be utilizing and stick with those. Too much information can be confusing and counter-productive
- Take the inventories in Naviance:
 - Know your personality, interests, abilities and learning styles before you look at the settings that will be appropriate for you

Searching for Colleges

HOW WILL I GENERATE A LIST OF
PROSPECTIVE COLLEGES THAT ARE
RIGHT FOR ME?

Use Your Resources

- Counselors, teachers, and administrators
- College guidebooks
 - Ruggs Recommendations on the Colleges
 - The Fiske Guide to Colleges
 - The College Finder
 - The K & W Guide to College Programs and Services for Students with Learning Disabilities or ADHD
 - The Princeton Review's Best 377 College
- Websites
 - [Naviance](#)
 - College resources from [SHSD website](#)
 - [Fair Test](#)

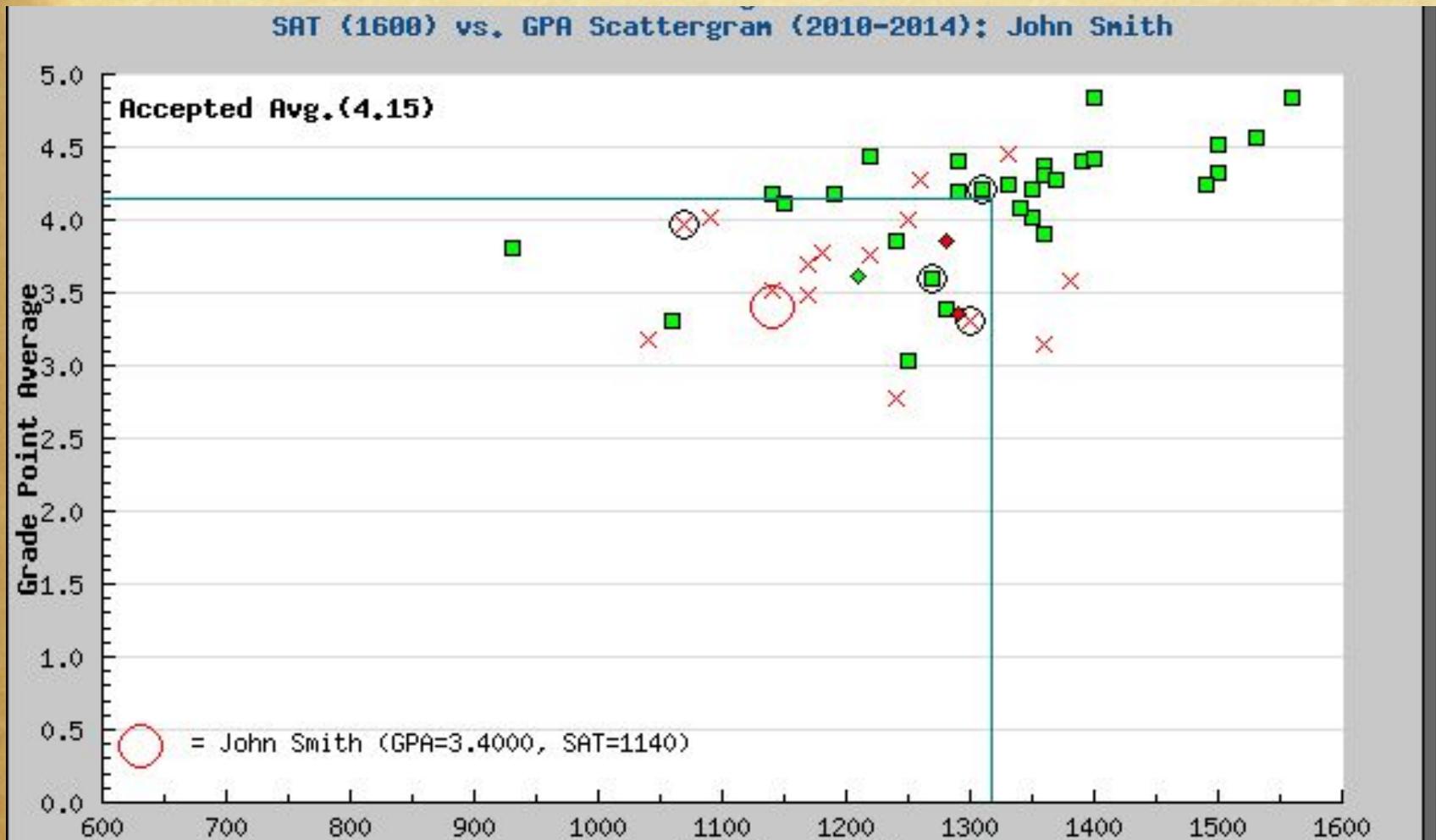
Finding the Right “Fit”

- Create your own rankings
- Think about what is important to you:
 - In what environment will I be most comfortable?
 - How far away from home do I want to be:
 - Am I a city person? Or, do I want the social life to be on campus?
 - Will I be lost in a large setting?
 - Do admitted students have similar grades and test scores to me?
 - Do I want to be able to balance academics with a social life?
 - Does it need to have a particular religious affiliation?
 - Will I play a sport?
- Find a college that will challenge you academically, fulfill you personally, satisfy you socially, and prepare you for the future.

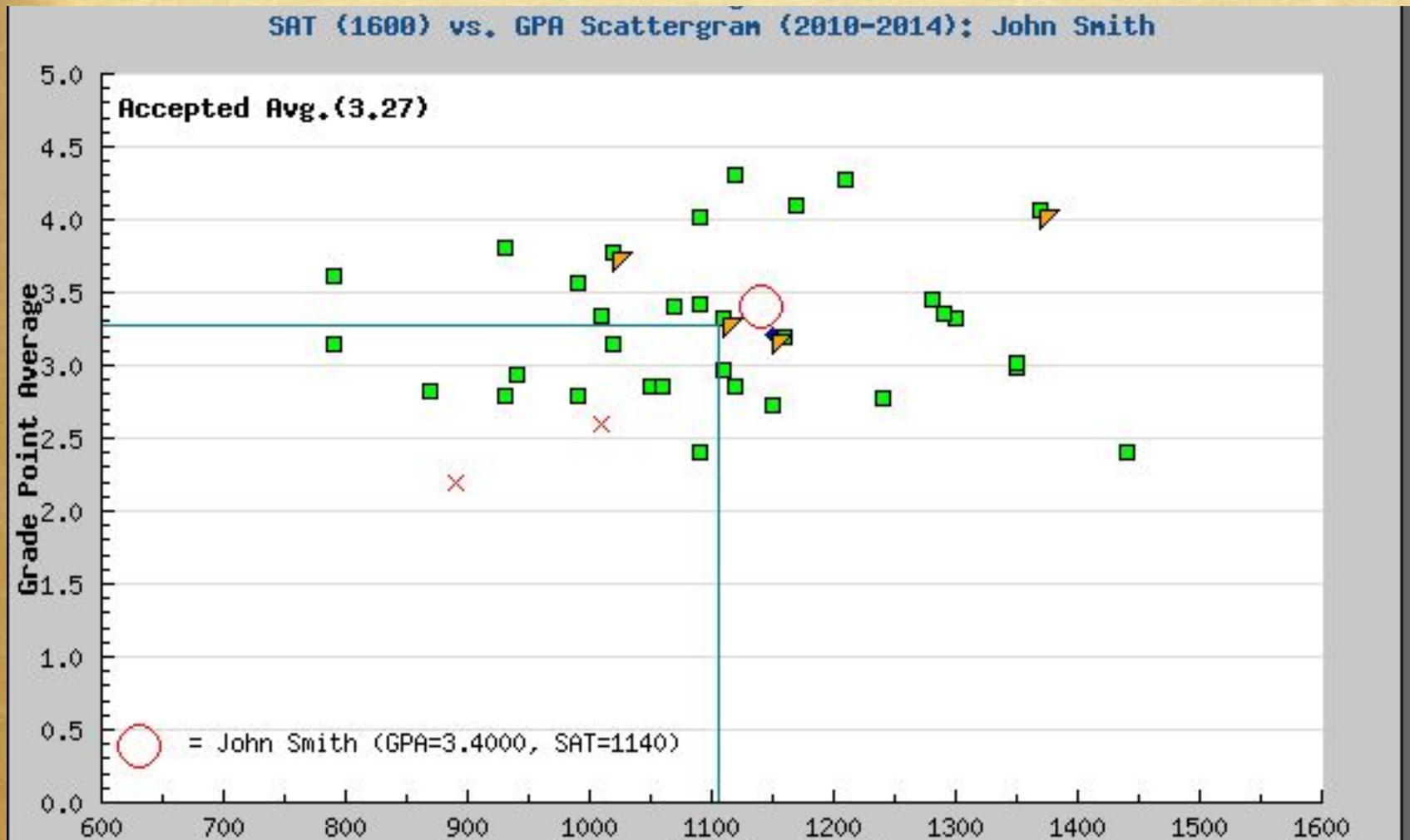
Where do I begin?

- Naviance! (Everything you need to get started)
 - Inventories
 - Search tools – criteria used to generate an initial list
 - College data
 - BHS acceptances from past 5 years
 - Scattergrams
 - College profiles, including admission criteria and deadlines
 - Quick links to college websites
 - Save your list of prospective colleges
 - Summer and enrichment programs
 - Scholarships
 - Additional resources

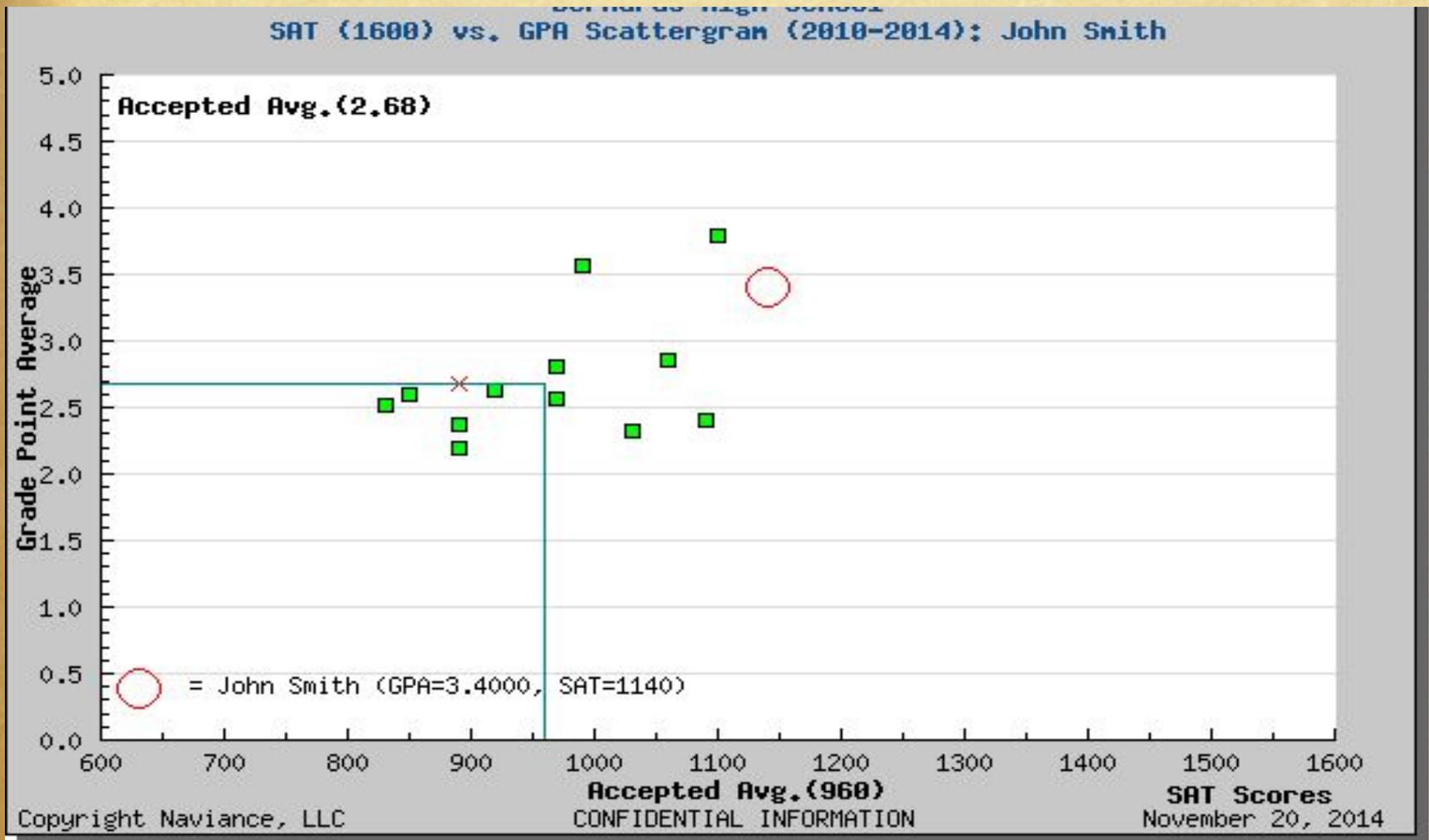
Scattergram (Reach)



Scattergram (Target)



Scattergram (Likely)



Now what?

- Go to a college fair
- Visit a variety of college campuses
- Meet with college representatives that visit Bernards in the fall (sign up on Naviance)
- Keep an open mind. Your guidance counselors have had the opportunity to meet with hundreds of college representatives
- Create a list and then continue to refine it. Keep a list of colleges that you are considering in Naviance and share these with your counselor

Be realistic

- Set realistic expectations. Don't expect to find the "perfect" college, but rather several schools that fit your criteria
- There are many colleges that will offer a rewarding and challenging experience for you, while preparing you for the challenges in the job market
- Use the scattergrams to get a picture of the admissions statistics, but also stick to schools that look for students with similar strengths and interests as yours
- Avoid going into the process with notions of "best" and "top" and "tier"
- Cast a wide net and keep options open

Be Realistic

(A Note for Parents)

- Be a supportive resource for your child
- Be involved, but don't take over!
- Remember, this process is just that – a process, which has as much value as the outcome itself.

NCAA

- Student athletes intending to play a sport in college
 - Register with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#)
 - Review eligibility requirements
 - Be aware that not all BHS courses meet eligibility requirements
 - List of approved courses found on Guidance webpage
 - Make sure your coach(es) and your counselor know your intentions

Applying

WHAT DOES A COLLEGE
APPLICATION INCLUDE?

The Application

- Common Application
 - Single application that students can complete and submit to over 600 participating colleges
 - Why use the common app?
 - Saves time
 - Stay organized
- Institutional application: found on schools' websites
- Coalition Application
 - Coalition for Access and Affordability
 - Member colleges must meet certain eligibility criteria pertaining to access for under-represented students, affordability, and student success

The Transcript

- Courses by grade
- Final Grades
- Grade Point Average
 - Colleges will evaluate these within the context of our school profile
 - BHS Profile can be accessed from the SHSD website and in the “document library” in Naviance.
 - Colleges often recalculate GPA

Test Scores

- Many colleges will review student's test scores as criteria for admission.
- Test scores ARE NOT part of a student's transcript and must be sent directly from the testing center
 - SAT
 - ACT
- Are test scores always required?
 - No. A number of schools have become "test-optional"
 - Refer to college website for specific details about "test-optional" policy

Essays/Personal Statement

- Each school will have specific requirements regarding the essay
- Why is this a requirement?
 - Gaining admission to college goes beyond grades and test scores
 - Use this opportunity to personalize your application
 - Don't restate what is elsewhere on the application
 - Tell them something about yourself they would not otherwise know
- Topics:
 - Some ask for a general personal statement
 - Others ask for a writing sample
 - Still others ask students to respond to particular questions
 - Personal experience
 - A situation that taught you something
 - An experience that had a profound effect on you

Essays (continued)

- Start early!
- Enlist help (but not too much)
- Write from the heart
- DO NOT have someone else write it for you (Parents, that includes you ;-)
- Practice, revise, edit, proofread!
- Organization is key: make sure you know well in advance if a college requires more than one essay
- Don't wait until the last minute
- *Join us in March for a presentation about college essay writing
– check the Guidance webpage for details

Activities Resume

- Create a resume that lists:
 - After-school activities
 - Community activities including community service and volunteer work
 - Employment
 - Athletics
 - Leadership positions
 - Honors and awards
- Can create a resume in Naviance

Teacher Recommendations

- Provide insight into student's daily interactions
- Teachers can comment on student's participation, progress, level of involvement, organizational skills, analytical skills, etc.
- Make sure you know if your teacher requires additional information
 - Copy of your resume, a brag sheet, etc.
- Which teachers should I ask?
 - Current teachers are best
 - Teachers with whom you have had positive interactions
 - Teachers that know you well
 - Perhaps teachers in the areas of your interest
 - In the end, ask teachers that will present you in the most positive way possible

School Report & Counselor Recommendation

- Valuable information for the colleges
- Counselors give a view of the whole student
- Counselors require a student “brag sheet” from all students before writing the letter
- Again, don’t wait until the last minute
- Counselors appreciate a “brag” sheet from parents as well
- The more information they have, the more thorough and specific the letter will be

Interview

- Vary greatly from one college to the next
 - Sometimes required, sometimes recommended
 - Sometimes offered, sometimes not offered
 - Sometimes with admissions officer, sometimes with a current student, sometimes with an alum
 - Sometimes on campus, sometimes in a local, public place (i.e.: Starbucks)
- Know what kind of interview/where in advance

Interview (continued)

- When offered/available:
 - Prepare questions
 - Do your homework... know the school!
 - Be yourself and answer questions honestly
 - Make up a list of questions ahead of time and practice
 - This is an opportunity for you to determine if this is truly a fit for you. The interviewer is trying to determine if your background fits within their particular campus environment

Application Plans/Deadlines

STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST SUITS YOU?

Non-Restrictive Application Plans

Regular Decision

DEFINITION:

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

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Rolling Admission

DEFINITION:

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

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Early Action (EA)

DEFINITION:

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

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Restrictive Application Plans

Early Decision (ED)

DEFINITION:

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

COMMITMENT:

BINDING

Restrictive Early Action (REA)

DEFINITION:

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

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Financial Aid

- Federal Aid
- State Aid
- Institutional Aid
- Outside scholarships
- Aid is either “need” based or “merit” based
- File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as of October 1, 2019
- Some schools will also require the CSS-profile or an institutional form
- While researching colleges go the school’s financial aid page to get an idea of aid available.
 - By law, every college website needs to provide a net price calculator

Financial Aid (continued)

- Some helpful websites:
 - <http://www.fastweb.com/>
 - <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>
 - <http://www.hesaa.org/Pages/StudentsParents.aspx>
 - <https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm?execution=e1s1>
 - <http://www.fafsaonline.com/fafsa-on-the-web/fafsa-for-ecaster.php>
 - <http://www.finaid.org/>
- Talk to your counselor at Junior Conference (Jan/Feb 2019)
- Financial Aid Night – Fall 2019 (date TBD)

Upcoming Events

- Junior Conferences: Jan/Feb 2019*
- Essay Writing Speaker: March/April 2019
- Senior College Night: September 2019*
- Bernards/Ridge College Fair: October 2019*
- Financial Aid Night: Fall 2019*

*specific dates TBD

Questions?