

SHS College Planning Monthly Checklist (20xx-20xx)

August/September

- Draft, review and refine your Common App essay.
- Register for the SAT and/or ACT. It is recommended to take these tests with writing. College admissions policies vary; therefore, results from “optional” writing sections may help you access certain colleges. (www.collegeboard.org, www.act.org)
- Make sure your schedule is rigorous and challenging for your junior/senior year and all graduation requirements will be met.
- Attend the **mandatory** Junior/Senior Morning Meeting to review these steps and other important information. Details of time/date/place will be announced in late August.
- Make an appointment with your school counselor to discuss the college application process, Naviance, Letters of Recommendation, and the Common App. *If you are working with an independent private college advisor, you still need to meet with your SHS school counselor.*
- Attend the Griffin-Spalding County School College Fair at _____ X/23 (6:30 – 8:30 PM) and X/23 (9:00 – 11:00 AM).
- Complete NCAA requirements if planning to participate in college athletics (www.eligibilitycenter.org).
- Return completed forms:
 - Transcript Release Form
 - Teacher Feedback Form
 - Confidential Parent/Guardian Feedback Form
 - Student Personal Information Survey
- If you haven't completed this step at the end of your junior year, ask one or two teachers (depending on college requirements) for letters of recommendation, preferably academic teachers from your junior or senior years. Be sure to make this request in person by Oct. 1. Also ask what the teachers need from you to write your letter. Follow up with an email and attach your resume (a task assigned to you on your junior checklist).
- In Naviance, under the Colleges tab, enter the names of the people you asked for letters of recommendation.
- Compile and fine tune your prospective college list. Use Naviance as a resource for college searches. Enter your list of colleges that you are considering under the Colleges tab in Naviance. Specify colleges you are actually applying to under the Colleges I'm Applying to tab and check the box to request that your transcript be sent. You must indicate application deadlines so teachers can prioritize their letter writing.
- Explore college costs at collegenavigator.gov once you started your college list. Find information about tuition, fees, housing, admission, graduate rates, campus safety and more.
- Consider whether you are applying to colleges Early Action or Early Decision.
- For each college you plan to apply to, request official test scores from College Board (SAT) and/or ACT. *Please note that high schools do not maintain or send official scores.*
- Create a Common Application account (www.commonapp.org). Check if colleges you are considering use the Common Application (if so, “CA” will appear in Naviance next to the college name). Check with your counselor to match your Common Application to your Naviance account. Without matching these two accounts, Counselor cannot submit your materials on your behalf. Start to familiarize yourself with the sections of the Common App.
- Schedule interviews at your colleges, if desired.
- Meet with visiting college representatives at SHS.
- Research the required essays for each college, and begin working on these. Some colleges require additional essays. Please check the Supplemental essay section as well as the Questions section of the Common App for each college. Have a teacher or another trusted adult review your drafts.

October

- Finalize your Common App essay.
- Work on your supplemental essays.
- Register for the SAT and/or ACT. (www.collegeboard.org, www.act.org)
- For each college you plan to apply to, request official test scores from College Board (SAT) and/or ACT. Please note that high schools do not maintain or send official scores.
- If applying Early Action or Early Decision, be aware of college deadlines (11/23, 11/23). Some colleges will have deadlines (rolling, priority, early decision and early action) as early as this month.
- If you cannot afford the application fees that many colleges charge, ask your school counselor to help you request a fee waiver.
- Attend the Financial Aid Form Workshop held at the school.
- File your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon after October 1 as possible. In addition to determining your eligibility for federal funds, many colleges and states use the form when distributing grants, so don't delay. Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR) – it should arrive in four weeks after the FAFSA is filed. Your SAR is a document that gives you basic information about your eligibility for federal financial aid. It also gives you a chance to review and correct the information listed on your FAFSA.
- All financial aid applicants submit FAFSA (www.fafsa.ed.gov). Early financial aid applicants have better chances of receiving funding. Some private colleges require the CSS Profile Form (<https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>).
- Start putting money away for college deposits (usually due May 1), saving a bit each month between now and May will make it easier to pay the \$200 - \$800 that will be due.
- Research scholarships. Ask your school counselor, your colleges and local religious and civic groups about scholarship opportunities. Check out the scholarship information in Naviance – we keep this up-to-date weekly with new scholarships offered. Avoid scams that ask you to pay for scholarship information.

November

- Pay attention to early application deadlines.
- Finalize and send any early decision or early applications due this month. Have a parent, teacher, school counselor or other adult review the application before it is submitted.
- Every college will require a copy of your transcript from your high school. Follow the school's procedure for sending transcripts.
- Register for the SAT and/or ACT.
- Keep your grades up. Colleges consider senior grades seriously.
- Check in with your school counselor.
- Finalize your supplemental essays, Common App essays and non-CA applications.
- Consider setting up a job shadow to see if the field you are interested in is really what you think.

December

- First semester ends after the December break. Plan ahead because the office is closed during the break. Send in applications after review with school counselor. Request all transcripts, application packets, etc. needed through early January by the first week in December.
- Early Decision and Early Action admissions decisions arrive; please notify counselor of results and update Naviance.
- Check as see that FAFSA have been submitted.
- Be sure to request that College Board (SAT) and ACT send your scores to your colleges.
- Consider setting up a job shadow to see if the field you are interested in is really what you think.
- Deferred from your first choice? Contact the Admissions Office to let them know you're still interested.

January

- If deferred from Early Action or Early Decision, send additional information to enhance your application. See your school counselor for additional information suggestions.
- When possible, set up interviews with admissions officers or alumni interviewers.
- Mid-year reports of first semester grades are sent.
- Consider taking a gap year. Speak to your parents/guardians and school counselor about gap year options. Begin your research and planning to decide if this is a good fit for you.

February/March

- Keep your grades up. Second semester matters.
- Seniors receive admissions decisions. Please notify your school counselor of results and update Naviance.
- See your school counselor if you are wait-listed to review next steps. Visit, call and write the admission office to make your interest clear. Ask how you can strengthen your application. Your school counselor can help you draft a message to admissions.
- AP exam registration details are disseminated in your AP classes.
- Start researching scholarships through Naviance and local sources.
- Visits colleges during break to decide best fit.
- If planning on taking a gap year, make sure you know application deadlines.

April

- Visit colleges during break.
- Seniors receive admissions decisions. Please notify your counselor of results and update Naviance.
- Attend Admitted Students Day at colleges.
- Apply for any applicable scholarships.

May

- Make your college choice. Send deposit to just one college by May 1. Notify other colleges that you are going elsewhere.
- Crunch the numbers. You may need to borrow to cover the difference between your total college costs and the financial aid you received. Your financial aid award letter is likely to include a variety of education loans.
- Contact the school's financial aid office to discuss payment options.
- Update your college admittance status in Naviance and complete the online Naviance Senior Survey so we know where to send your final high school transcript. Without this status, we cannot send your final transcript. Without the final transcript, the college could rescind their offer of admission.
- AP exams are administered. Keep your AP Grade Report if you're interested in earning college credit. Check with your college.
- Request official college transcript if you have taken a dual enrollment or other college course.
- If planning to take a gap year, contact your college and ask about process for requesting a deferment. Then complete the process in a timely manner.

June

- If you plan to compete in DI or DII college sports, request that your final transcript be sent to NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse.
- If you haven't already, update your college admittance status in Naviance and complete the online Naviance Senior Survey so we know where to send your final high school transcript. Without this status, we cannot send your final transcript. Without the final transcript, the college could rescind their offer of admission.
- Complete your final Final Exams!
- Pat yourself on your back – congratulations!