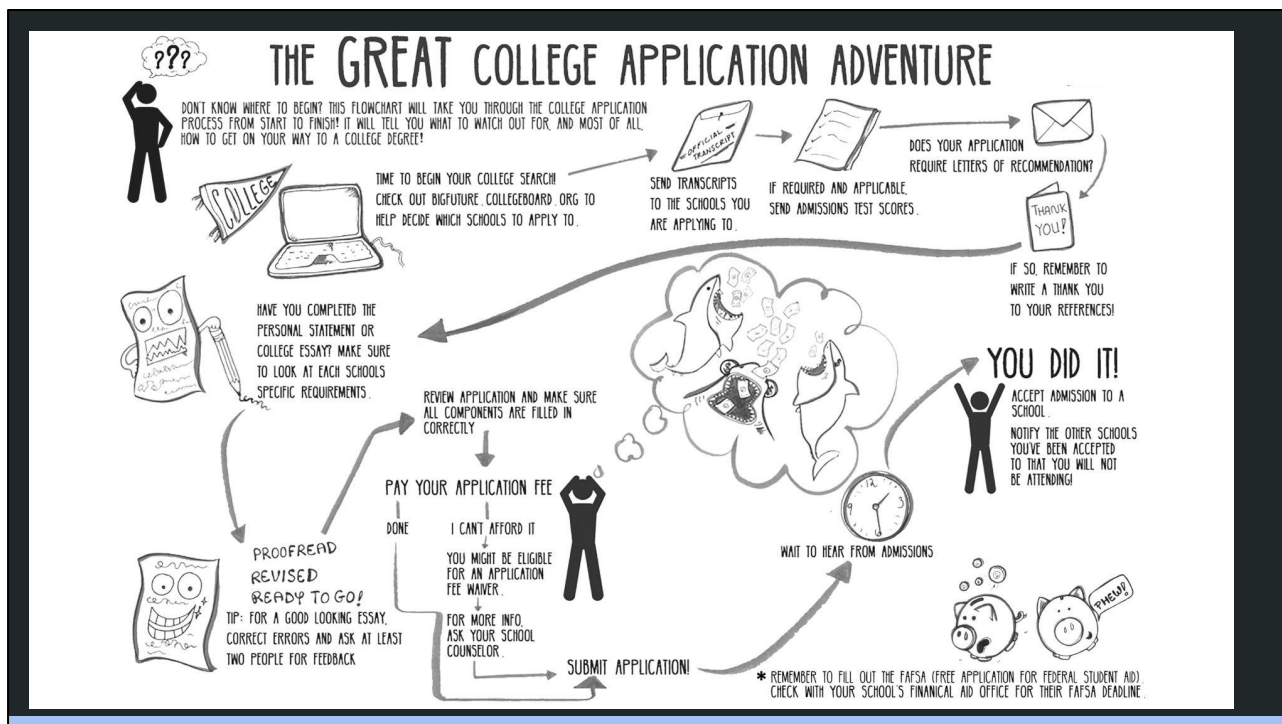


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It is not a straight line! The College process and all that is involved is a marathon not a sprint. But in the end, they will get everything they need in order to be successful, and make their choice.

Agenda

- what have the students done so far?
- College planning resources
- Things to consider
- College Applications
- Campus Visits
- Letters of Recommendation
- Financial Aid
- NCAA
- Timeline



What have the students done so far?

PSAT- taken in October; scores found in student account on www.collegeboard.org

Students were shown how to use the online resources to help practice and improve SAT scores.
[Khan Academy | Free Online Courses, Lessons & Practice](#)

College Representative visits- were posted and announced for students to sign up to meet with colleges of interest.

Registered for the Upcoming National College Fair- All juniors attended the College Fair on Wednesday March 19, 2025. Typically, over 200 hundred colleges attend from across the US and some International. <https://www.nacacattend.org/24Buffalo/4308945?page=1&per-page=50>

Junior Meetings-individual meetings were held between the student and their counselor to discuss post graduation plans, what steps should be taken next, and what resources are at their disposal

In Class Presentation on the Class of 2026 Google Classroom- this is where all things College and Career are housed for students to have 24/7 access to resources and supports.

What should Juniors be doing now?

Register for the SAT through Collegeboard www.collegeboard.org

→ *Plan to take the SAT once if not twice (spring junior year, fall senior year)*

Register for the ACT through www.act.org

Build your College list using google, specific college websites, or <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>

Attend **Spring Open Houses** and plan **Visits**. Colleges are focused on actively recruiting for the Freshman Class of Fall 2026. Go to any college admissions home page and click on visit or sign up for Open House to register. They have virtual options as well!

Students have also been introduced to [O*NET OnLine](http://O*NET.OnLine) an up to date US Labor website where students can explore careers, growth estimates, and take an interest inventory.

Things to know when starting the college admissions process:

1. Organization is key- plan out visits and tours with schedules. Maybe try to fit 2 in 1 day.
2. Make time during the week- this is a consuming process in that a little bit goes a long way
3. Think about your needs/wants. What is a must for a campus to be considered vs. that would be nice if it had...
4. Lastly, remember there is help available. Counselors are available to answer questions and help keep the process moving forward.

Things to Consider; College Comparison and Research

- Geographic location and size
- Cost and financial aid
- Average GPA, SAT, and ACT Score
- Admission policy
- Majors and educational programs
- Personal factors
- Campus environment
- Campus activities
- Support services

*By law every college has a financial aid calculator located on their website. Put in your income and you will receive an estimate of the level of aid you can receive from that institution.

Remember this is a process. Open communication with your student in regards to their goals compared to parents expectations is good to have.

College Applications

Most of you will use the Common Application

- <https://www.commonapp.org/apply>

SUNY Application

- <https://www.suny.edu/attend/apply-to-suny/>

If you are applying via a college specific website, please let your counselor know.

*A reminder that this process is all electronic! Over 700 schools are represented on the Common App. There is a fee for each application, that typically runs from \$50 - \$75. At times, if you visit a school, they give you a fee waiver! If you are in economic need, your student can apply for a fee waiver online through the common app, and SUNY schools offer free application week.

One question asked was "If my child applies through the CommonApp, will each College be able to see how many other institutions they applied to?" The answer is no. Your child will fill out an application that is sent to multiple universities, but they will not be able to see the list of places your student applied to.

Campus Visits- There are many options!

- In Person Campus Visit
- Open House
- Virtual Tour
- Self Guided Tour
- Information Sessions

For example, www.canisius.edu

Emails and announcements are sent out frequently to update students on visits, free application windows, college fairs and more. Communication is critical during this time! Remember to check your email, or stop down to the Counseling office if you have any questions.

*Know your deadlines! Admissions, Scholarships, and Specific Major requirements (Portfolio, Interview, Audition)

Letters of Recommendation

What is it?

A letter of recommendation for college admission is a short document typically written by a teacher, counselor, or mentor/coach/employer highlighting your strengths and potential contributions to a school. You must carefully choose who will write your letters of recommendation and be thoughtful and responsible when asking for them.

We will provide students with a google form “brag sheet” to complete and share with the people they ask to write their letter. Typically 2- one should be from a teacher.

We have a form that students fill out to aid with the process. They will use this document to then ask their teacher if they would be willing to write their letter. *You need 2 letters, one needs to be from a teacher, the other can be a coach, mentor, or boss. Once letters have been written, they will be uploaded right to the common app.

Financial Aid

Application can be found out:

<https://studentaid.gov/>

- New FAFSA started in year 2024-2025.
- Use taxes from 2 years ago. For Fall 2026, use taxes from 2024.
- Typically FAFSA opens on October 1st. (Date has varied last 2 years).

Once it has gone live - we will let you know!

Lots can happen in 2 years, if your income has changed - you can call the FAFSA to update information (lost a job - healthcare-debt-ect) Most schools will work with you - your child will need to give permission to speak with you.

Be sure to remember your username and password. If you need to reset, you'll need to call and that can take time!

*** St. Mary's will hold a Financial Aid Night in the Fall

NCAA Eligibility

- Division I and Division II Athletes (does not apply to Division III)
- Any student wishing to compete in collegiate sports at the DI or DII level, ***MUST*** create an athlete account to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.
- There is a \$100 fee.
- Students should register before the start of their Senior year.
- Register here: <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>

Create an account - option 2 - \$100

Put in your child's information, sport, grade, and their transcript will be uploaded.

This May in English Class...

Set up a Common Application account and review how to complete it.

Discuss How to Ask for a letter of Recommendation and receive a “Brag Sheet”.

Discuss and start writing the College Essay together (to be completed in English class).

Review Big Future to continue building your college list.

Review the '26 Counseling Center Google Classroom and the resources available it.

OVER THE SUMMER:

Continue to research and visit campuses.

Start making decisions on colleges you want to apply to, become familiar with any application deadlines and testing policies.

Make sure you are registered for a solid senior year of courses.

We work often at multiple stages to go through the process with you! Reviewing resources and next steps. The Junior summer is key for solidifying plans!

Q&A