

Sayreville War Memorial High School Guidance Department



Junior Parent Night 2017

Choose the characteristics that you consider important in your college search:

- Setting: urban, suburban, rural
- Location: distance from home
- Size of school
- Academic environment: majors offered, class size, faculty, facilities
- Extracurriculars: social activities, clubs, intramural sports, campus events
- Cost and financial aid

Use available resources to gather information about colleges and narrow down your list:

- Websites:
 - Family Connection/Naviance: www.connection.naviance.com/swmhs
 - College Board: www.collegeboard.org
 - College Confidential: www.collegeconfidential.com
 - Colleges' admissions websites
 - Colleges That Change Lives: www.ctcl.org
- College fairs
http://www.njacac.org/index.php?page=committees_national_college_fairs.php
- Campus visits/Open Houses
- Meet with college reps at SWMHS: September through December 2017 (sign up on Family Connection/Naviance)
- Meet with your School Counselor

Components of the College Application:

- High School Transcript
- Application
- Essay
- Letters of Recommendation
- Standardized Test Scores

High School Transcript

- Lists the final grades for all courses the student took in HS
- Cumulative, weighted GPA
- Class rank- Initial September 2017 ~Final GPA / rank February 2018
- Rigor of courses is important

Application

- Use the application on the college's website or the Common App, if it is accepted by the college
- Common App (www.commonapp.org) is a single application that is accepted at over 500 colleges in the US; an additional supplement for some colleges may be required
- Early Decision Vs. Early Action
- Fee Waivers

Early Decision (ED):

- This is a binding decision. If a student is offered admission under ED, he/she must withdraw all other applications.
- ED should only be used if a student has a very strong preference for the first choice college.
- Deadline is usually mid-October/November with the decision received by the end of December
- Pro: Admission rates can be higher for ED students
- Con: Financial Aid: you will not be able to compare financial aid packages from several universities
- Not every college offers Early Decision

Early Action (EA):

- Same timeline as ED but the decision is non-binding.
- Students have until May 1st to make their final decision.
- Not every college offers an EA option

Essay

- Sample essay questions can be found online or by previewing applications.
- Have several different people read and give feedback on your essay (including at least one English teacher).
- College admission officers look to the essay for evidence that a student can write well. They also want to know something about the personality of the student.
- Avoid writing out your resume in paragraph form. It's better to develop one small event, person, place, feeling or idea with a lot of narrative and specifics.
- Be yourself and be sincere.
- The Common App essay prompts become available in August.

Letters of Recommendation

- Should be from teachers in academic subjects who have witnessed your work ethic.
- Ask teachers in late spring of junior year or early Fall of senior year.
- Can include a supplementary letter from a coach, work or volunteer supervisor, or club advisor.

Standardized Test Scores

- SAT: sat.collegeboard.com
- ACTs: www.actstudent.org
- SAT Subject Tests (for more competitive colleges that require them)

Registration is ONLINE

- Sayreville War Memorial High School CEEB code: 311355
- Test Fee Waivers (For those on Free and Reduced lunch)

Financial Aid

- FAFSA is required for all need-based aid www.fafsa.gov. It is recommended that all parents complete the application in October 2017
- CSS Profile is required for some private universities profileonline.collegeboard.com
- NJ HESAA is a good resource for parents: www.njhesaa.org
- NJSTARS if funds are available, the top 15% of the class is eligible for free tuition to Middlesex County College www.NJSTARS.net

Scholarships

- Some colleges have a priority deadline for scholarship consideration.
- Resources:
 - Naviance: Scholarship page, Naviance emails
 - District website
- Websites:
 - www.scholarships.com
 - www.fastweb.com

NCAA

- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center to determine eligibility for Division I & II sports
www.ncaaeligibilitycenter.com
- See your counselor with any questions about approved courses prior to your senior year

Counselor's Role

- Provide resources
- Assist with application process
- Meet with seniors throughout process
- Help guide the process for student/family
- Advocate for student's best interest
- Provide letter of recommendation
- Liaison between school and college

Parents' Role

- Discuss/Listen
- Support Student and School
- College visits, college fairs, monitor process/grades
- Utilize Naviance/Family Connection Tools/PowerSchool
- Become Informed about the college process

Student's Role

- Deep involvement in a few activities is better than casual involvement in many activities
- Challenge yourself! Take the most challenging course load you can senior year while still maintaining strong grades
- Stay organized!
 - Create a folder for each college's materials
 - Create a spreadsheet listing each college's deadline and application requirements
- Be aware of your deadlines!
- Complete all applications by Winter Break of your senior year

Junior To-Do List

- Begin to research colleges. Create a primary list. Find schools that match your GPA and test scores.
- Develop a strong, academically based senior schedule and earn the best grades possible.
- Register for Spring SAT and/or ACT.
- Visit a variety of schools – different sizes, different locations, and different levels of admission difficulty. Schedule visits during weekends, spring break and the summer.
- Attend NACAC National College Fair in New Jersey and visit school websites for further information.
- Identify one or two teachers and ask them before the school year ends if they would be willing to write you a letter of recommendation.
- Read and review the ABC's of College Planning Book.
- Make sure you attend your counselor's junior planning group.
- Athletes should register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.