The College Application Checklist

- ★ First things first. Think back to the Spring when the counselors came into your classroom to discuss future planning. We created Naviance accounts together. If you don't remember your password, click 'Forgot Password' and follow the instructions. If you haven't created an account, do so here.
- ★ You will be applying to the majority of your schools through Common App. Create your account as a first year student.
- ★ These two websites are very important for the entirety of the application process and you will log into both sites frequently. Take a minute now to put your email/password in your phone for easy access.

1 **Make a balanced list of schools which align to your goals and reflect who you are.** ☐

Choose schools based on your own priorities and interests. Consider finances, major options, class sizes, location, distance from home, special programs, etc. Talk to your parents, school counselor, and teachers in your quest to find the best fit for your future. We suggest choosing at least two safety schools, two match schools, and one reach school for a balanced list. Use the Applications Organizer to help streamline and simplify the college process. Once you've researched your options, log onto Naviance and add your schools to your "Prospective Schools" list.

2 **Check admission requirements.** ☐

Each school has different requirements and deadlines for their application process. It's very important to adhere to each deadline and requirement when submitting your application. Does your top choice school require SAT/ACT scores for submission? If so, sign up for SATs or sign up for the ACTs and send your scores through ACT. Will you need to request recommendation letters? If so, one or two letters? Check deadlines for your intended major and make sure you submit your application by the due date indicated on each school's website, Common App, or Naviance.

Hot tip *Many schools, especially because of the pandemic, have decided to go test optional. Make sure to check FairTest for a long list of test optional schools and keep your Saturday morning free!*

3 **Draft and finalize your college essay.** ☐

Most schools will require a personal essay as part of the application requirements. The essay is a great way to showcase your writing skills and give admissions a sense of who you are. Common App will provide prompts for you to inspire your story, or you can write about a meaningful topic outside of your prompts. The possibilities are endless!

Hot tip *We don't recommend using COVID-19 as a topic for your essay. Common App will provide a dedicated space to elaborate on the impact of the pandemic, both personally and academically. Your essay is a chance to share your interests and perspectives beyond COVID-19.*

4 **Ask for letters of recommendation.** ☐

Colleges often ask for 1-3 recommendation letters (check the requirements) in order to assess your goals and character. These letters should be written by someone who knows you well and can speak to your talents, accomplishments, and personality. If you're asking a teacher or school counselor to write a letter, keep in mind many others students are probably asking for the same. **Make sure you have a conversation with your teacher and counselor at least four weeks in advance for a letter.** Once your teacher has agreed to write a letter, you must submit an official request through Naviance. You do not need to request a letter electronically from your counselor, just have the conversation. However, we do need you to fill out the Future Planning Questionnaire on Naviance for additional details to add to your letter. Log on to Naviance and click on the About Me Home tab on the right hand side of the page. Scroll down to the Future Planning Questionnaire survey and answer the questions to assist your counselor in writing your letter.

5 **Match your accounts and apply to your chosen schools.**
Before applying to your schools, you must match Common App and Naviance. These two sites work together during the college application process. You will be able to apply to the majority of schools on the Common Application. Log into your account, create your profile, add colleges to your list, and submit your applications. It's that simple. ☐

6 **Request your official transcript on Naviance.**
In order for your counselor to send your transcript to each school you're applying to, you must request an official transcript through your Naviance account. Click here for detailed instructions. ☐

7 **Complete the FAFSA.**
Apply for federal grants, work-study, and loans with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid Form (FAFSA). Your college uses your FAFSA data to determine your federal aid eligibility. This application must be done with your parents/guardians, as they will need to submit their financial information. Before starting the application, both you and your parents will need to create your own FSA ID. In order to complete the application, you and your parents will need tax returns from 2019. ☐

8 **Search for available scholarships.**
Start looking for scholarships after you've applied to your schools. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Check Naviance, the Guidance Google Classroom, your chosen college financial aid office, and numerous search engines (i.e. FastWeb.com, CollegeBoard.org, ScholarSnapp) to find opportunities that are tailored to your experiences and interests. ☐

MOST IMPORTANTLY YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR IS HERE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY! MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH US AS MANY TIMES AS YOU NEED!