



College Admissions Handbook

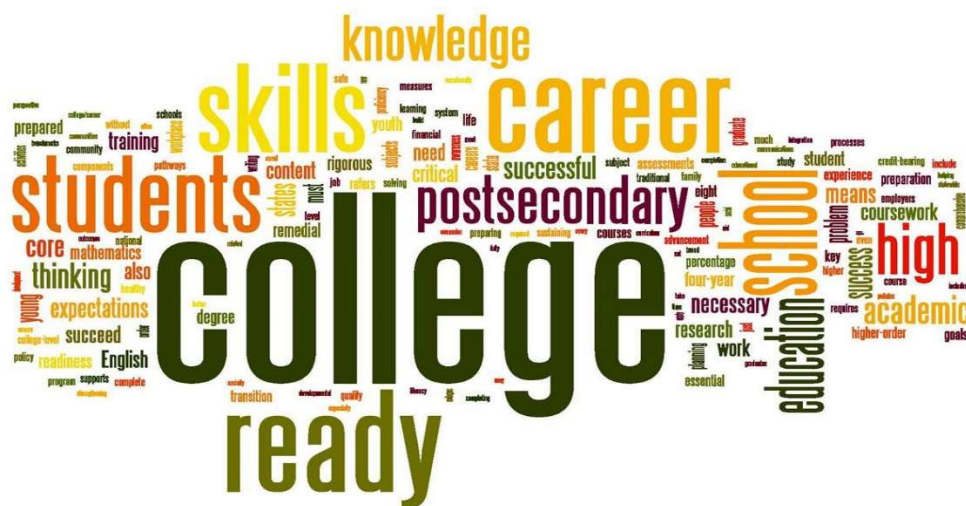
A guide for the Class of 2021

School Code: 211004

Created by CHS Counseling Staff

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Graduation Requirement Reminders

- At the end of junior year, you will receive a letter outlining what credits you have earned, and what you still need to meet graduation requirements. You will also receive a letter during February of your senior year with remaining graduation requirements. See your counselor with any questions.
- You must earn at least 25 credits to graduate, including credits in specific areas. See the Program of Studies for details. **At least 4 credits must be earned during senior year.**

<u>Academic Area</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Academic Area</u>	<u>Credits</u>
* English	4	* Fine Arts	1
* Social Studies Govt., U.S. History, World History	3	* Technology Education	1
* Science	3	* Physical Education	1
Physics, Chemistry, Biology		* Health	½
* Mathematics	3	* Financial Literacy	½
Two credit of Algebra		* World Language	2
One credit of Geometry			
All students shall enroll in a math course each year of high school.		OR	
		* Advanced Technology	2
		OR	
		* State Approved Career & Technology Completer Program	4 – 9

- You must meet the requirements for state testing for Government, English, Algebra, and Biology.
- All students must be assessed no later than 11th grade for College & Career Readiness in English and Math.
- Transition courses or instructional opportunities will be offered in 12th grade for students who have not met requirements by the end of 11th grade.
- Service Learning Hours**
 - 75-The **minimum** number of hours required to graduate.
 - 300 (or more)-** The number of hours needed to earn an Exemplary Service Award. There is a deadline to turn in your hours; it is the first week in May.
 - If you are completing an experience during your senior year and will be earning hours that would make you eligible for this award, please see the counseling office or be sure to turn in your hours by the deadline of May 1st.
 - If you are looking for hours, listen to or view email announcements, and check the bulletin board in Knight Support
 - If you have any questions or need help, please see the School Counseling Office!

Century High School Website

Please utilize Century's website to access various resources that can assist with college planning and admission. www.carrollk12.org/chs Go to "School Counseling" to access information regarding the following topics:

- **Academics**
 - Graduation Requirements
 - Dual Enrollment
- **College and Career Planning**
 - College Planning Timelines
 - College Comparison Worksheets
 - College Search Engines
 - NAVIANCE
 - College Power Points (Junior Spring Meeting and Senior Fall Meeting)
 - Power Point on NCAA Clearinghouse
 - College Admission Process
 - PDF of College Admissions Handbook
 - Scholarship Information
 - Carroll County Listing of all Scholarships and CHS Scholarship Newsletter
 - Link to the FAFSA
- **Test and Assessment Information**
 - Link to "SAT" (dates, deadlines, and registration link)
 - Link to "ACT" (dates, deadlines, and registration link)



College Admissions Timeline

Junior Year - Spring

- **Make sure you continue to work hard during junior year courses-** applications for college are in the fall semester, which means your GPA is based on final grades in courses through junior year. Plan rigorous courses for your senior year as colleges will see your senior year schedule and may request first quarter and midyear grades.
- **Know your graduation requirements.** Check your course requests and senior year schedule.
- **Be aware of unique opportunities for senior year.** Consider an internship, AP courses, dual enrollment as ways to differentiate your college application. Be proactive!
- **Take the SAT or ACT at least twice.** Since colleges applications are in the fall, you may only have one or two test dates to take the admissions tests during senior year.
- **Search for colleges and do college visits.** Use Naviance's SuperMatch or Advanced College Search to research colleges and plan visits. With prior notice to the attendance office, you are permitted two excused absences for college visits.
- **Attend College 101 at Century High School-** March 26th at 6:00. Bring your parents!

Senior Year - Summer

- **Decide on your list of colleges.** We recommend choosing a range of schools, based on your test scores and GPA. Research the details of these colleges' applications, including deadlines. Favorite ("heart") your top choices in Naviance
- **Create online accounts for your college applications.** See details in this packet regarding the Common Application and the Coalition Application.
- **Write your college essay.** Starting your essay over the summer allows enough time for proofreading and editing.
- **Finalize your resume and activities list.** Focus on specific activities and make this list as comprehensive as possible.
- **Complete counselor/teacher recommendation survey on Naviance!** This should be completed with as much detail as possible regarding interests and activities. It is extremely helpful if you put in a lot of effort into answering these questions.

- **Consider meeting with your counselor to address any remaining questions and share details about your college interests.** Call the counseling office to schedule an appointment- 410-386-4408.
- **Consider taking the August SAT or September ACT-** be mindful of college deadlines because there can be a three week processing time for scores to be sent.

Senior Year - Fall

- **Take advantage of college representative's visits to CHS.** Sign up for FLEX Chats to meet with them.
- **Ask teachers and counselor for a letter of recommendation.** Make sure to ask them at least a month prior to your colleges' deadlines.
- **Request your transcript.** All transcripts are requested through Naviance. See information later in packet for specific details on using Naviance to request transcripts.
- **Be mindful of all deadlines.** Many college deadlines are mid-October through early December, which means all your application material must be submitted by the date.
 - **Early Decision:** option to submit an application to your first-choice college before the regular deadline. Early decision plans are binding, which means you agree to enroll in the college if admitted and offered a financial aid package that meets your needs.
 - **Early Action (Priority Deadline):** option to submit an application before the regular deadline. These are not binding and students often apply to several schools with early action deadlines. *** *Early action deadlines give students increased chances for admissions and scholarship opportunities.* ***
 - **Rolling Admissions:** an admission policy of considering each application as soon as all required information (transcript, test scores, etc.) are received. Students are offered admissions decisions until space in the class is filled.
 - **Regular Decision:** deadline set by college to receive applications.
- **Take SAT or ACT again, if necessary.** Be aware of score processing time! Colleges requires official SAT and ACT scores to be sent directly from the testing company.
- **Submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).** Available at www.fafsa.ed.gov after October 1. FAFSA is required for any financial aid consideration by the federal government, state, or individual college. Please check with colleges for specific financial aid deadlines.

Senior Year Winter and Spring

- **Search for scholarships.** Use the CHS Scholarship Newsletter and the CCPS County listing to view local and national scholarships. Visit the CHS website:
<https://www.carrollk12.org/schools/high/chs/SchoolCounseling/CollegeCareerPlanning/Pages/ScholarshipInformation.aspx>
- **Keep your grades up-** many colleges require first quarter or midyear grades for decisions.
- **Continue to visit colleges you have been accepted to.**
- **Receive notification of college decisions.** Process information, including any financial aid decisions, and let colleges know your final decision by May 1st.

College Admissions Testing: SAT, ACT, or BOTH?

Colleges generally do not prefer one over the other, so the choice is up to you! Both ACT and SAT scores are used for college admissions and merit-based scholarships. The SAT and ACT generally test the same type of content, but the ACT has a Science Reasoning Test and there is one more SAT Math Section for which you cannot use a calculator. Both tests are only offered on specific dates throughout the year.

	SAT	ACT
Why take it?	Used for admissions and merit based scholarships	Used for admissions and merit based scholarships
Test Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing & Language • Math • Essay (Optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Math • Reading • Science Reasoning • Essay (Optional)
Length	3 hours (without essay) 3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay) Offered seven times during the school year.	2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay) 3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay) Offered seven times during the school year
Reading	5 reading passages	4 reading passages
Science	None	1 science section, testing critical thinking skills (not specific science knowledge)
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arithmetic • Algebra I & II • Geometry • Trigonometry • Data Analysis <p>Slightly more time per question. More word problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arithmetic • Algebra I & II • Geometry • Trigonometry • Data Analysis
Calculator Policy	Some math questions do not allow calculators.	All math questions allow a calculator.
Essay	Optional: Essay will test comprehension of a course text.	Optional: Essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.
Score	Score on a scale of 400-1600	Score on a scale of 1-36.

How do I choose?

The best way to decide which test is right for you is to take a full length practice test. Here are the testing websites for both test where you can practice and learn more:

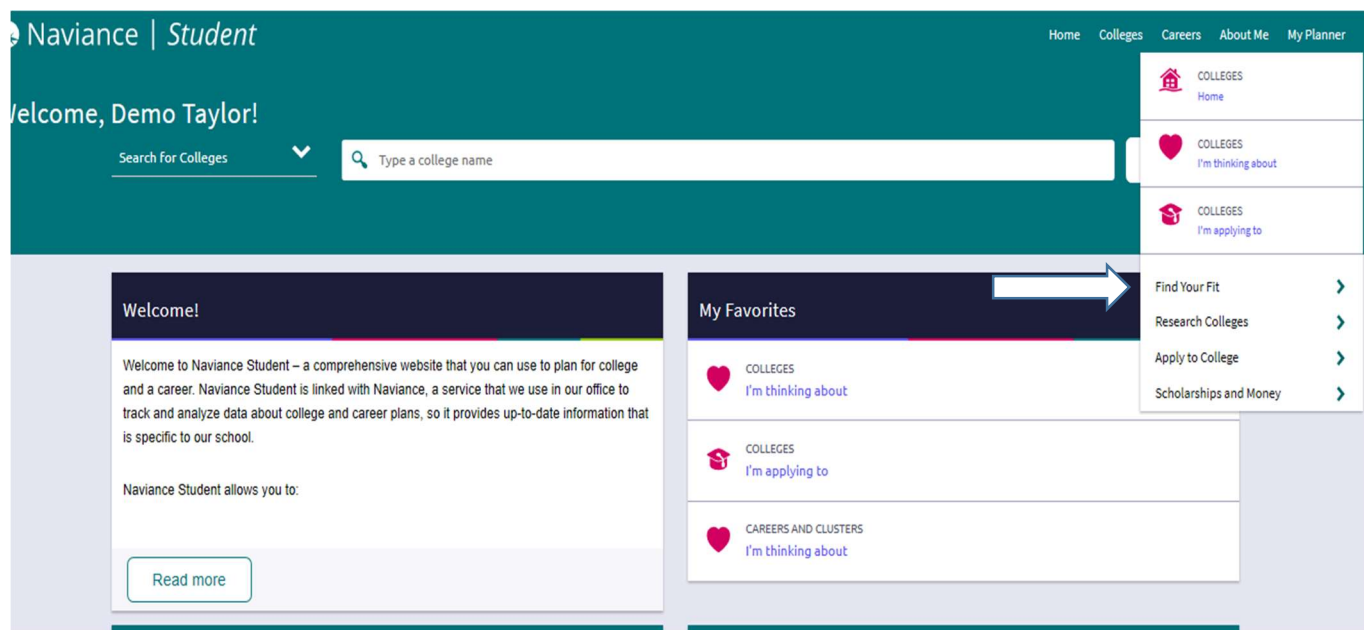
ACT: www.actstudent.org

SAT: www.collegeboard.org

Test date information as well as how to sign up and where to take the tests can also be found on these websites. Please note that very select colleges may require SAT Subject tests, which are one hour long tests in specific subjects. For detailed information on requirements, please check with individual colleges.

Source: www.princetonreview.com

The College Search using Naviance!



Now that you have decided that you wish to attend college, there are many options to consider such as:

- **Two-year vs. Four-year:** Some students prefer to save money or stay closer to home when starting college courses, therefore deciding to attend a two-year community college or technical college. These schools award associate's degrees, which is all that is required in some careers. Some students decide to take courses with the goal of transferring credits to a four-year school.
- **Private vs. Public:** If choosing a four-year college, you'll need to decide between a school that is funded privately or publicly. Don't exclude private colleges by thinking they are more expensive. Financial aid can sometimes make them just as affordable as public colleges.

In order to make a decision that is the “best fit” for you, it's important to perform a self -assessment on yourself to start thinking about your personal comfort levels with regards to college choices. Self-assessments will help you explore your interests in academic programs, school size, location and housing, affordability, lifestyle, and special programs.

Important: Make sure you do your own research and work! This is your process so, take ownership of it. Don't delegate something this important to your future, even to your parents!

When making your list of schools to apply to, The Princeton Review recommends starting with about 6 schools.

- 2 Reach Schools- Schools that might be a long shot for acceptance based on finances and/or academics
- 2 Target School- Schools that are within the range of your credentials (SAT, ACT, or GPA)
- 2 Safety Schools- Schools where your credentials exceed the college's requirements for admittance

How do I pick which colleges to visit?

The more information you have about colleges and universities of interest; the better chance you have of making a good decision. There are many sources of information available to you. The College Handbook and The Book of Majors are great resources that can be accessed in the School Counseling Office.

College representatives often make visits to Century to meet with students and are advertised in the Knightly News and on the daily announcements, along with instructions on how to sign up. These visits are an excellent opportunity to learn about colleges.

By far the most valuable source of information for you is the college visit! If possible, try to plan your visit during the academic year, so you are on the campus while students are there and classes are in session.

What you need to know about college visits

There is no better way to get a feel for whether a college is the right one for you, than by visiting it. The best time to visit a college is when class is in session and to take an official tour. Junior year is a great time to start visiting some local colleges!

*Visit small, medium and large campuses to experience the differences. Even if you do not think you want to go to a certain type of school, you should visit just to make sure your feelings are correct.

We are lucky to have many different sized schools in our area –

Large – University of Maryland

Medium – Towson

Medium to Smaller – Salisbury, Frostburg

Small – Mt. St Mary's, McDaniel, Hood, Stevenson, Goucher,



*Sign up for a tour through the colleges website. This way, if you decide to apply, they know that you have already made the effort to visit them. There are generally two kinds of campus visit events –

Regular Campus Tour – Usually an admissions counselor will speak to a small group of families for about 30 minutes before you take a guided tour throughout campus. On the tour you will see academic buildings, the dining hall, dorms, recreational facilities and the student center.

Open House – This is a campus wide event that draws several thousand people. There are usually tables set up for different majors and organizations. There may be large presentations as well as smaller breakout sessions for financial aid information and opportunities to meet with professors in each department. You will also be able to take a campus tour and possibly eat in the dining hall!

*Things to take notice of –

- Atmosphere, school spirit, condition of the facilities, extracurricular activities, transportation, internship opportunities
- Ask your tour guide or any other student why they chose that school and what the campus is like on the weekend. Do most students go home or stay on campus?
- Look around the campus. Would you be comfortable here for the next four years?
- Drive around the neighborhoods surrounding campus. Does it seem safe?

College Interviews

In general, fewer colleges are offering on campus interviews. This is especially true of large, public universities. However, the more selective the school or specific program, the greater likelihood of an interview being part of the process. Many colleges rely on alumni across the country to conduct the interviews in their hometowns and report back.

It may be helpful to request an interview if you are a student who has more to offer than appears through your GPA and test scores. Sometimes showing your personality helps the admissions officer see the real you.

A good interview is more like a conversation, with flow back and forth. Be prepared to discuss your transcript and why you may have gotten a poor grade in a class. You should be able to verbalize what it is about that particular college that excites you and what you hope to get out of your experience there. Also, have questions ready to ask the interviewer such as what was the best thing about the college when they attended there.

Do Not Bring Your Parents!

Dress appropriately. Professional dress could include dress slacks, blazer, appropriate length skirts, collared shirts, ties, and business attire shoes.

Be On Time!

Bring a resume highlighting your achievements, extracurricular and work activities.

Send a Thank You Email!



Online Applications – Common App, Coalition, School Specific

The Common App and Coalition are two different application programs that serve the same purpose – to make it easier for students to send their application to multiple colleges at once.

These applications are very similar in content (the way Coke & Pepsi are similar), but are different both in appearance and some extra utilities.

Things to remember –

- The college selects which application program they use, not the student.
- Students can create an account and start entering information far before their deadlines. Essay questions are usually available on August 1st, so you have plenty of time to work on writing a great essay!
- Many schools require their own supplemental questions, which are available through Common App/Coalition.
- A few schools do not use either of these programs and instead have their own online application (Towson, for example).

Websites:

Common Application: <https://www.commonapp.org/>

Coalition for College Access: <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/>

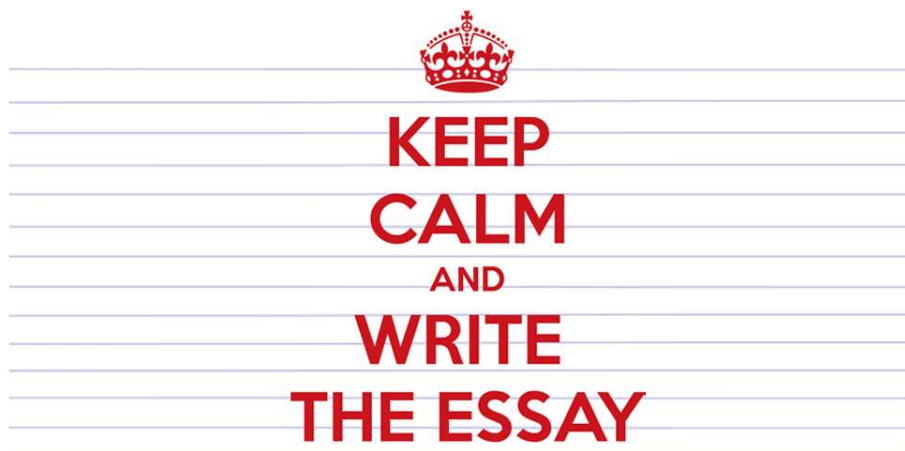
Check each website for specific colleges regarding which application they use. Set up an account and begin to complete each section.



Tips for Writing your College Essay

A well written essay sets you apart from the sea of numbers (GPA, test scores, class rank) that are elsewhere on your application. It is an opportunity for the admission officers to get to know the real you. In addition, it demonstrates that you are able to write at a college level and shows why you would be a good addition to their campus.

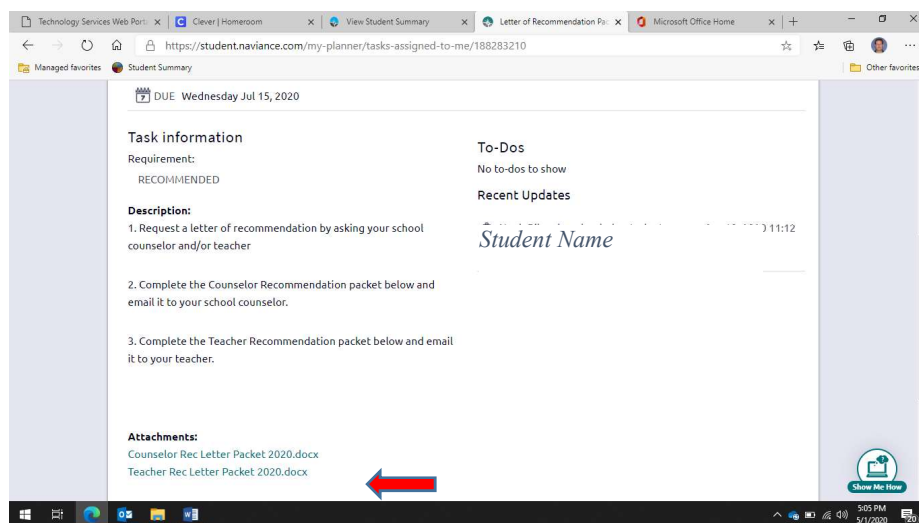
- Give yourself several weeks, not days, to write your essay.
- Be aware of the required length and abide by it.
- Be yourself. Don't try to be the person you think they are looking for.
- If there is a prompt, read it many times and think about it, before you start writing.
- Stuck on what to write? Relax and think about how you are different from others, how you view the world, any life changing events, your passions, how you have grown throughout high school.
There are no right or wrong answers!
- Don't list your accomplishments. There is a specific place for that on the application.
- Don't try to impress the college by using unnecessary and big, fancy words.
- Have an attention grabbing first sentence or paragraph. It will hook the reader – they will be interested to find out more!
- Have one or two trusted adults read your essay. Have a conversation with them about how it could be improved.
- PROOFREAD PROOFREAD PROOFREAD !!!! Cannot emphasize this enough!
- Again – be aware of deadlines, length requirements and your grammar!



Letters of Recommendation: How to Stand out from the Crowd

Most college applications request two or three recommendation letters from people who know you in and out of the classroom. **CHS students requesting letters from counselors and teachers must complete a recommendation packet on Naviance at least one month before college deadlines.**

You can find the survey on Naviance → My Planner → Tasks → Letter of Recommendation Packet → See two attachments (Counselor and Teacher Packets)



Whom should I ask?

- Often colleges request letters of recommendation from an academic teacher (sometimes a specific discipline) and/or your school counselor. If a non-specified academic teacher is requested, your English or Math teachers usually make good candidates. Also, you should use a teacher from junior year or a current teacher if they have known you long enough to form an opinion. Coaches or advisors can be used in addition to an academic teacher.

When should I ask?

- Make sure to give your recommendation writers plenty of time—at least one month before letters are due—to complete and send your recommendations, but as with anything, the earlier the better. Make sure you give them details about your colleges, where to send their letter, and the deadlines.

How can I get the best possible recommendations?

- Talk to your recommendation writers and make your recommendation packets as detailed as possible. For teachers, it's important that they focus on your academic talents and accomplishments within their classroom. In the recommendation packet, you should highlight a particular incident, paper, or anything else that might help them provide anecdotal information and specific examples of your achievement, rather than just vague praise.
- For your counselor letter of recommendation, it is important that they know about your plans, accomplishments, and involvements. You will want to provide them with a detailed resume of your activities and goals. Also, if there is some aspect of your transcript that needs explaining (i.e. low grade, withdrawing from a course, etc.), it's helpful to talk with your counselors to explain why and how you've changed and improved.
- We recommend waiving your rights to view the recommendation letter. This gives more credibility to the recommendation in the eyes of the college. Make sure you follow up with a thank you note, either in person, in writing, or through email.

Requesting Your Transcript through Naviance

Transcripts are the foundation of nearly all college applications as they are a record of your classes and final grades during high school. If a student requests an official transcript (for scholarships or other purposes), it will be placed in a sealed envelope, which is to remain sealed. Students may view their unofficial transcript on HAC, but colleges require official transcripts sent directly from the high school.

1. Log into your Naviance account
2. Click on “Colleges I am applying to”
3. Click on large pink + on right hand side
4. Type in college name under “Which college are you applying to?”
5. Under “App type”, select your admission plan (Early Action, Regular Decision, etc...)
6. Under “I’ll submit my application”, select your method (Common App, Direct to the institution)
7. DO NOT check “I’ve submitted my application”
8. Click “Add and Request Transcript”
9. Check “Initial”, under “What type of transcript are you requesting?”
 - **DO NOT CLICK ANYTHING ABOUT SAT SCORES** – CCPS does not include them on transcripts
10. Click “Request and Finish”
11. Repeat procedure for all additional colleges

CHS can send three transcripts for free. After that, each transcript will cost \$2.00.

Please note that the CHS transcript will include final grades in classes from 8th/9th -11th grades, weighted and unweighted GPA and class rank, service learning hours, and a list of your senior year courses. It will NOT contain test scores (SAT, ACT, or AP scores)- those must be requested directly from the testing company. Included with every transcript sent to colleges is a school profile, a two-sided document that includes information on Century High School: its grading system, how students are ranked, how courses are leveled, a listing of AP course offerings, its scheduling structure, and graduation requirements.

The screenshot shows the Naviance Student interface. At the top, there's a teal header with the Naviance logo and 'Student' text. Below this is a dark blue bar with 'Colleges I'm applying to' and a search icon. A green banner below that says 'Your Common App account has been matched.' and 'Your FERPA status is not waived. You're ready to apply to colleges using Common App.' In the middle right, there are links for 'Manage Transcripts', 'Application Milestones', and 'Compare Me', followed by a pink '+' button. Below these links is a section for 'College that I'm attending:' with a dropdown menu showing 'N/A' and an 'Update' button. At the bottom, there's a section for 'Letters of recommendation' with a note about submitting them with applications.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

Types of Aid

There are two basic types of financial assistance:

1. Money which you work for or borrow- includes work study and loans
2. Money which is gifted (not repaid)- includes grants and scholarships

Awarded for:

- Merit (based on GPA and/or SAT/ACT scores)
- Need (based on family financial information)
- Talent (sports, fine arts, etc.)
- Community Service
- Nominations



Sources of Aid

Students generally have five sources of aid available to them:

1. The federal government- offers grants and low interest loans to students and/or parents
2. The state government- offers grants based on need and/or merit for in-state schools
3. Institutional funds (from the college or university)- aid may be based on need and/or merit
4. Foundations, community, businesses, organizations- you must research this! See below for websites.
5. Bonds, savings and loans, credit unions (parent/ student loans)

FAFSA form

The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form is required by all institutions if you are applying for any type of financial aid. It is available at www.fafsa.ed.gov. **(Please be mindful not to use the .com webpage- the correct FAFSA site uses .gov).** The FAFSA becomes available on October 1st of your senior year. Check your school's websites for deadlines, but as a general rule, the earlier the FAFSA is submitted, the better your chances for receiving money. The FAFSA calculates your family's EFC (Estimated Family Contribution), which colleges and universities use to determine what aid will be offered.

FSA ID- The FSA ID is the username and password that you will use when you visit UD Department of Education websites. You also use it to sign forms (including the FAFSA) when required. To create your FSA ID, visit <https://fsaid.ed.gov>

Helpful websites:

<https://www.carrollk12.org/schools/high/chs/SchoolCounseling/CollegeCareerPlanning/Pages/ScholarshipInformation.aspx>: CHS website with monthly scholarship newsletter

<https://www.carrollk12.org/instruction/studentservices/counselor/Pages/ScholarshipApplications.aspx> - County Scholarship Listing. Some scholarship applications can be picked up in the CHS counseling office.

<http://www.finaid.org/> -comprehensive site explaining scholarships, loans, military aid, and 529 savings plans

<https://www.fastweb.com/> - scholarship search database

<https://maryland529.com/> - helps families map their college savings using only flexible payment plans

<https://mhec.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx> - information about federal financial aid available through Maryland and programs like Academic Common Market

www.collegeboard.org - tools and calculators to figure out how to pay for college.

Beware of scholarship scams! Never pay money to get money!

Source: www.getin2college.com

Information for Student Athletes

For those students who are considering participation in intercollegiate sports, there are extra steps in the college planning process. Requirements for athletic eligibility depend on if the college is an NCAA Division I, II, III or NAIA affiliated school. Students interested in playing NCAA Division I or II sports must meet initial eligibility requirements before they can join a university team.

What is the difference between NCAA and NAIA?

The NCAA and NAIA are the governing bodies of college athletics. NAIA is a smaller association. Both offer scholarships and both require a minimum of a 2.0 cumulative GPA in high school. Both also require proof of documentation that the SAT or ACT has been taken.

NCAA and NAIA differ in their recruitment processes. For instance, the NCAA requires students to complete a certain number of core courses, while the NAIA does not.

Prospective student athletes can find more information about the NCAA at [Http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future](http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future) and NAIA <https://www.naia.org/>.

You can find prospective student athlete handbooks on both websites that explain each process in more depth.

Registering with the Eligibility Center

Both NCAA and NAIA have eligibility centers in order to determine eligibility for future student athletes. Students should register with the NCAA eligibility center after completion of their junior year in high school. Students need to create an account and register at www.eligibilitycenter.org or www.PlayNAIA.org. Once this is created students will need to request a transcript through the counseling office so that we can send a transcript on your behalf. Student must send SAT or ACT scores directly to the NCAA or NAIA from the testing center. Once your registration is complete, your eligibility status is available to any college that requests it.

Should I register with the eligibility center as a junior even if I'm not sure that I want to participate in the university athletic program?

The decision to pursue university athletics can be a difficult one. Many athletes practice as many as 20 hours per week while attending classes full time. However, if you think you may participate, it would be to your advantage to complete the forms at this early stage. Remember though, you can also begin this process in the senior year if you should decide at a later date that you want to play.