

College Application Process – Key Items to Pay Close Attention To

College Websites

Prior to starting a college application, **RESEARCH THE INSTITUTION'S WEBSITE!** The college's **undergraduate admissions website** is a good place to start as each institution's application process and policies vary. These include but are not limited to:

- High school coursework requirements
- Admission standards
- Application Deadlines, Requirements & College Testing Information
- Additional items to submit besides their college application
- Direct Admission Programs offered- Eligibility Criteria, Requirements & Processes
- Honors College Information
- Majors/Minors
- Scholarship opportunities
- Cost of Attendance
- Virtual visit opportunities
- Admissions Counselor information
- Dual Credit & AP Credit Transfer

*Click [here](#) for a list of Indiana college/university websites

Stay Organized with your College Applications

Once you have decided on the schools for which you plan to apply, it is time to organize yourself for completing their college applications. Here are some recommendations:

- Create an organizational tool to note information mentioned above for each school in your list
- Bookmark each school's website
- Use the same e-mail address for all your college applications and communications
- Be sure your e-mail address is professional and appropriate
- Check your e-mail daily to ensure you don't miss important information, notifications/updates, or deadlines from colleges
- Create separate folders in your e-mail for each college to save communications
- Keep track of the usernames/passwords for each college application account
- Read information sent out from Mrs. Martin via Naviance and Schoology
- Check out all the college/career resources on your Naviance home page and Schoology Team Resources folder

Application Deadline Options

It is extremely important to note application deadlines for each college application you are planning to submit. Please note that each college has their own deadline dates. It is imperative to check college admissions sites for detailed information on their deadlines, especially to note application deadlines to meet for scholarship consideration, honors college admission, direct admission programs, housing, etc. Application deadline options include: **Early Action (EA), Rolling Admission, Regular Decision, Early**

Decision (ED), Restrictive Early Action (REA). College admission websites provide helpful explanations for the deadline options they offer, and many times, a timetable for which applicants will receive admissions decisions based on the deadline selected/met. For definitions on application deadline options, click [here](#).

Although both Early Action and Early Decision release admission decisions earlier than regular decision, there is a big difference between Early Action and Early Decision. With Early Action, application deadlines are earlier and decisions are released earlier than Regular Decision. Early Action is *non-binding* and students have until the May 1 reply date to decide/accept the offer to the school. Early Decision is a *binding* agreement in which if accepted to a school ED, the student agrees to enroll at the school and must withdraw all other applications. You can only apply to one school ED. Early Decision is not an option offered by all schools- many selective schools offer this deadline.

Some colleges have **Rolling Admissions** in which colleges review applications as students submit them and return decisions on a rolling basis. It is typically in your best interest to apply early when applying to rolling admissions schools.

Please carefully review the application deadlines of the schools on your list, especially the deadline to meet for scholarship consideration at the school. Many Indiana public institutions have **Early Action deadlines of November 1** (non-binding)- please check each school's admissions site for the most up-to-date information. **Most college applications ask students to select the application deadline they are meeting, so please be sure to select the one you decide on and do your research!** If you have questions, see Mrs. Martin.

Note: Seniors applying Early Decision (ED) or Restrictive Early Action (REA) to a school should contact Mrs. Martin so she is aware. Please let Mrs. Martin know if you are applying to a selective school this year as well as the deadline you are meeting.

SAT/ACT Testing Information

For SAT:

- Register for the SAT at www.collegeboard.org
- For a complete listing of 2020-21 SAT Test Dates & Information, visit <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/dates-deadlines>

For ACT:

- Register for the ACT at www.act.org
- For a complete listing of 2020-21 ACT Test Dates & Information, visit www.act.org

***We highly recommend signing up for one or more of the early SAT and ACT tests this year.**

Sending SAT/ACT Test Scores: Most colleges require that ACT and/or SAT scores be officially received directly from the testing agencies. To send your official scores, you must log-in to the account you created when you registered for the ACT (www.act.org) or SAT (www.collegeboard.org) and request that your scores be sent to colleges. Most colleges will super-score if more than one set of test scores are sent to them.

Note- Your counselors do not have access to student SAT and ACT accounts, and therefore, cannot see if test scores have been sent to colleges from their SAT/ACT accounts.

For admissions testing information, we recommend visiting the specific college/university admissions websites for testing information and requirements they have posted for seniors applying for Fall 2021. Each college/university is different in their admissions requirements, so it is best to research the university websites to see if the SAT/ACT is required for admission consideration. **Some colleges may have a test-optional policy but you must understand each school's explanation, policy, & eligibility for scholarship consideration, direct admission, honors college consideration, etc. It is very critical to look at this information prior to completing applications.** If any of the schools you are applying to have a test-optional policy this year and you have questions on whether to have your test scores reviewed or not for admission, we recommend reaching out to an admissions counselor at the institution to make an informed decision. Again, please be sure to check the school's website for their testing requirements, policy, FAQs, and application questions regarding this.

College Application Options- Varies by Specific College/University

Colleges/Universities vary in the college application options students can choose- some only have one application students must use, whereas others provide more than one option. **It is best to first gather your list of schools and refer to each of their admissions websites to see the applications they offer.** Then create your list of colleges and the applications they offer, and next note which application you plan to complete for each college in your list.

Which application should you choose? Below are some helpful tips.

Common Application

- Almost 900 colleges/universities nation-wide use the Common Application
 - Visit www.commonapp.org for a full listing of member colleges
- The Common App is ONE application that can be sent to multiple colleges separately.
- If more than one or all of the colleges you are applying to have the Common Application as an option, it is recommended to use the Common App.
- If a college is Common Application exclusive, you must use this application.
- Once you create a Common App account, you will search for each of the colleges you are applying to and add them to your “Dashboard” and “My Colleges” tabs.
- Many colleges will have additional items to complete besides the Common App itself, such as supplemental information specific to their school, an additional essay, other questions to answer, etc.
- Common App includes helpful application guides, video tutorials, and FAQs that provide step-by-step instructions while completing the Common App.
- The Common App is lengthy, but also savable. Do not wait until the day of a college application deadline to start the Common Application.
- **IMPORTANT: If you do apply to one or more schools with the Common Application, you MUST connect your Naviance account to your Common Application account. Instructions on how to do this can be found on the “Naviance Directions” document or “Matching your Common App Account to your Naviance Student Account” video located in the team Resources folder in**

Schoology and in the “From My School” section on the Naviance home page. See Mrs. Martin if you need help.

Institutional Application

- Some colleges only have their institutional application as an option.
- Go to the school’s undergraduate admissions website and look for an “Apply”/” Apply Now” link for freshman applicants to start the application
- Many colleges offer their institutional application as well as the Common Application as options.
 - You then must decide which application to complete for that specific college.
 - Colleges do not have a preference of one application over the other- just be sure to choose one application to complete for that specific school.
- Institutional applications are typically shorter in length.
- If none of the other colleges you are applying to use the Common Application and they offer an institutional application, it is recommended to use the college’s institutional application.
- Some colleges may offer an exclusive/express institutional application in which their application fee may be waived, the application is shorter, essay is waived, etc.
 - Not all colleges offer these, but check your e-mail for any of these application opportunities

Coalition Application

- About 150 colleges/universities nation-wide use the Coalition Application
- Visit <https://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/> to view their member colleges
- If a college is Coalition exclusive, you must use this application.
- See Mrs. Martin if you plan to use the Coalition Application so she is aware. She will need to know this for counselor items that must be submitted to colleges who use the Coalition (transcripts, letters of rec).

Note- If you are not sure which college application to use for each of the schools you are applying to, contact Mrs. Martin and she can assist you.

Application Components

Applications contain different sections. Below are some key components to note.

Previous and Current Senior year courses- Many applications ask you to indicate previous classes taken in grades 9, 10, 11 and your current senior year courses. If they ask for the type of course scheduling system we use, we are on a semester schedule. You can find your previous and senior year courses in PowerSchool or you may ask your counselor for a copy of your high school transcript. For any dual credit courses you indicate, some applications refer to those as “dual enrollment.”

Self-reporting of grades- Some colleges may require you to self-report your high school grades. You can find your previous courses in PowerSchool or you may ask your counselor for a copy of your high school transcript. For those colleges who require self-reporting of courses and grades and use the Common Application, we recommend using letter grades (A – F). For each *semester* course, you will enter your S1

grade, S2 grade, S1 # of credits, and S2 # of credits. Do not indicate a “Final” grade or “Final” # of credits for each course as final grades and final credits are not indicated on your transcript.

Cumulative GPA- To find your cumulative GPA for a college application, log in to Naviance and go to the “About Me” > “My Account” > “General Information” > “Academic” section. The GPA you see in PowerSchool is your current GPA, not your cumulative, so please be sure to check Naviance for your cumulative GPA. Your cumulative GPA is your overall GPA for grades 9, 10, 11.

Entry (Start) Term- Be sure to indicate your preferred Entry (start) Term for which you applying on each college application (Ex: Fall 2021).

Essay/Personal Statement- Many college applications require a personal statement or essay to be submitted, whereas some may not require one. Sometimes schools will indicate their personal statement or essay prompt on their admissions site. The Common Application includes a writing section in which some colleges require submission of the personal essay within your Common App. The Common App includes seven writing prompts in which students can select one to answer. Some schools may require their own school-specific writing prompt/supplement that serves as the required essay, or as an additional writing prompt.

The essay/personal statement is an opportunity for you to provide information that cannot be obtained from the rest of your application or transcript. Some colleges provide tips for the application essay and what they are looking for from applicants, thus we highly recommend researching college admissions websites for any information provided by the specific school. Here is a helpful resource from CollegeBoard for writing a college application essay: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays>

Activities- Many college applications include a section to list activity involvement. This is where you will want to indicate any extra-curricular activities, leadership positions, community service/volunteer work, internship opportunities, work experience, etc.

Honors/Awards- College applications may also ask you to indicate any academic or extra-curricular honors or awards received while in high school.

Resume- Some colleges may require or make optional a resume as part of their application. Naviance has a resume builder located in the “About Me” section, then “My Stuff”, then “Resume”. For directions on building a resume in Naviance, see the “Resume Builder Guide” in the “From My School” links on the home page of Naviance.

Academic Major- When indicating your academic major of choice on each college application, refer to *each* specific school’s website to confirm you are selecting the correct major. Many college websites include an Academics section in which you can find a listing of undergraduate majors and minors, by school or career interest.

Application Fee or Fee Waiver- Many colleges require an application fee. Visit the specific school’s website for the fee amount. Fees must be paid for your application to be complete. If you qualify for a fee waiver, be sure to indicate that on your college application. See your counselor if the college needs a fee waiver form submitted to them.

Application Tips:

- Most college applications are savable. Do a little at a time and review it thoroughly. Perfect your application before you submit it.
- Be professional- Use correct grammar, spelling, capitalization & punctuation.
- For any items in a college application that you unsure what they are asking for, contact Mrs. Martin for assistance.

IMPORTANT- You will use your NAVIANCE STUDENT ACCOUNT To:

1. Request your High School Transcript to be sent to the colleges you are applying to

We use Naviance to send high school transcripts electronically to colleges. **PLEASE watch the "Transcript Requests" video tutorial to make sure you are requesting your transcript for each college on your list correctly.** This video tutorial can be found in the "From My School" Links section on the home page of Naviance, in Schoology, and on the Team 2021 website. **You must make transcript requests for schools in Naviance in order for them to be submitted.**

Here are some important notes regarding transcript requests in Naviance:

- Please wait until you are close to or have submitted the college application to request your transcript for the specific college in Naviance.
- We must know if you applied "via Common App" or "Direct to the Institution" (i.e., the school's institutional application or another application the college offers) for the transcript request you make for the college in Naviance. If you don't mark that correctly, your transcript will not attach to your application accordingly.
 - *This is why we want you to wait until you are close to or have already submitted your application to make the transcript request. If you request your transcript too early and change your mind on the application option you submit for the college, your transcript may not connect to your application accordingly.*
- If using the Common Application, you must connect your Common App Account to your Naviance Student Account in order for us to submit your high school transcript to a Common App school. Please watch the "Common App Matching" video tutorial to do this- it can be found in the "From My School" Links section on the home page of Naviance, in Schoology, and on the Team 2021 website.
- The only way we know to send your high school transcript to a college is if you make the transcript request for the college in Naviance.

Other important notes:

- We are not informed by the college once an application has been submitted, so it is very important that you do this piece of the application process.
- Please give us time to submit transcripts. They are not sent automatically in Naviance. Keep in mind it is a process with submission and retrieval of transcripts- *uploaded* to Naviance from PowerSchool by your counselors, *submitted* by your counselors, *downloaded* by the college, and marked as *received* by the college.
- Keep your grades up senior year- Final transcripts are sent to attending colleges after graduation & midyear transcripts can be requested by colleges.

2. Request Teacher Letter of Recommendations to be sent to the colleges you are applying to

Some colleges require and/or recommend teacher letter of recommendation(s), and some do not. Be sure to check each school's requirements. BHS teachers have Naviance accounts, and we use Naviance to submit teacher letter of recommendations electronically to colleges. If you would like a BHS teacher to write a letter of recommendation for you, you **MUST make the teacher letter of recommendation request in Naviance. PLEASE watch the "Letter of Rec" video tutorial for instructions on how to do this.** This video tutorial can be found in the "From My School" Links section on the home page of Naviance, in Schoology, and on the Team 2021 website.

Here are some important notes regarding *teacher* letter of recommendation requests in Naviance:

- Please talk to the teacher first to ensure they can write you a letter.
- Then make the letter of recommendation request in Naviance. Always give recommenders at least 2-3 weeks advanced notice.
- After making the request, the teacher will receive a notification from Naviance regarding the request.
- Teachers upload the letters to Naviance and then we will send them.
- It is very helpful to teachers if you complete the "**Biography for Letters of Recommendation**" in **Naviance**. Teachers have access to your biography and assists them with writing a letter of recommendation for you. To complete your biography in Naviance, go to "About Me" > "Surveys" > "Surveys Not Started".

IMPORTANT: For the Common Application, you must request teacher letter of recommendations in your Naviance Student account. If you are using the Common Application, DO NOT "invite a recommender" (BHS teacher/counselor) in the Recommenders section of the Common Application because this will cause issues with submission of documents since Common App is connected to Naviance.

Secondary School Reports

Some colleges require additional forms that must be completed by your counselor. As you are researching college websites and their admission requirements, please let your counselor know if the college *requires a secondary school report* to be submitted for you. When we submit transcripts to Common App colleges in Naviance, we automatically complete the "Common App School Report" as it must be sent with the transcript. That said, if you are applying to a college using their institutional application or other application, and the secondary school report is a requirement for their application, please let us know so we can do this for you. College admission websites will typically list this if an application requirement and/or the college may e-mail you asking for it.

Notes regarding transcript requests, letter of rec requests, secondary school reports:

- Your counselors cannot see if all student materials have been received by the college. Only students can check their status with the school(s). Your counselors can only see if the transcript, school report, & any letter(s) of recommendation have been sent via Naviance.
- Please let Mrs. Martin know if you are applying to a military service academy as they have their own systems of submitting documents for admission consideration.

Pay Attention to Deadlines- Do Not Wait until the Last Minute!

College application deadlines are critical and firm deadlines. Be sure to plan ahead and remember the institution needs more than just your application for review. Do not wait until the last minute before a deadline to request transcripts and letters of recommendation for schools in Naviance, or any other item that the college requires for review (test scores, secondary school reports, etc.). Your counselors need time to process transcript and letter of recommendation requests in Naviance. Also note that sometimes college application websites and technology platforms can experience glitches, so waiting until the last minute is not recommended should that occur.

Check your Application Status

After you submit a college application, many colleges will send you instructions for creating an account with their institution to check your application status. Within your account/portal with the school, you will be able to see which materials have been received and if there are any pending items still needed. Many colleges will also include the status of your application (Complete, Incomplete, Under Review, Decision made, etc.). Be sure to check your e-mail regularly for any notifications of incomplete items from schools you have applied to as well as instructions for checking your application status.

Your counselors do not receive notifications of application submissions or admission decisions, nor notifications of “incomplete items” for college applications that you submit (transcript, test scores, application fee or fee waiver, any required letters of rec, etc.). It is your responsibility to check your application status with each school on your list.

It varies by college on the turn-around time for receiving an admission decision. Admission decisions can be delivered via e-mail, mail, or within the account with the college.

Questions?

Don't hesitate to ask questions. Contact Mrs. Martin via Schoology for assistance.