

Rising Senior College “To Do” List

Wissahickon High School

The following is a list college-related things to do over the at the end of junior year and summer before senior year. If you have any questions, please get in touch with your counselor or Ms. Anderson. The counselor summer schedule will be posted on the counseling website.

Big Picture

Student is responsible for sending:

- ✓ application
- ✓ SAT/ACT scores directly from collegeboard.org or actstudent.org
- ✓ Any outside recommendations from non-Wissahickon High School teachers
- ✓ self-reported transcripts (if applicable)

WHS is responsible for sending:

- ✓ official transcript (for schools requiring an official transcript)
- ✓ teacher/counselor recommendations and relevant forms
- ✓ fee waivers (if eligible)

General Timeline

Before senior year starts:

- Complete SENIOR QUESTIONNAIRE (see page 4 for more details)
- Work on essay
- Ask two teachers in-person to write letters of recommendation
 - Once confirmed, send Naviance request
- Visit colleges, research colleges on Naviance or other college search websites
- Start applications (officially around Aug. 1)
- Search for scholarships on sites like FastWeb.com, Naviance, Scholly, and Raise.me
- Request SAT/ACT scores to be sent from respective companies (can wait until after school starts as well)

After senior year starts:

- Take last ACTs/SATs, if necessary (send scores directly to colleges)
- Submit applications. Pay attention to deadlines for both applications and financial aid.
- Request transcripts from Counseling Department (begins 2nd week of school)
- Follow-up on letters of recommendation and provide timeline to teachers for completion
- Beginning October 1st, complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) using tax data from 2018
- Complete CSS Profile (if needed)

Winter of senior year:

- Search/apply for scholarships – check Naviance for new additions regularly
- Submit midyear grades, if required

Spring of senior year:

- Attend accepted student days to make informed decisions or to gather more information
- Compare financial aid packages
- Make a final decision and deposit to your school by May 1!

MORE COLLEGE DETAILS

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

Most applications get updated and released in early August. Common App will be released around Aug. 1. Feel free to use August to start filling out applications online. You may submit these and send SAT/ACT scores, but please realize that transcripts and recommendations will not be sent until the beginning of school. Several colleges with early release dates allow students to self-report their transcript. We can always give you an unofficial copy of your transcript, but know that senior schedules are typically not complete until mid-August.

COLLEGE VISITS

Summer is a good time to visit colleges because you have time off. Make sure you visit the college's website and verify their tour schedule. Usually, they will offer a 1 hour information session followed by a tour. Many schools will also require that you sign up in advance on their website, so check their tour schedules well in advance before you plan on visiting.

DEADLINES

Each college will have their own admission requirements and deadlines. Rolling admission colleges will begin accepting applications as soon as they open and will make decisions as soon as possible. Rolling schools may have a priority deadline as well. Early Action and Early Decision deadlines are typically Nov. 1 or 15th. Regular Decision deadlines are in January or February. We strongly encourage seniors to complete applications and transcript requests between Halloween and Thanksgiving. If for no other reason, most scholarship money is given out early in the application process and then the pressure of applying is off your shoulders. Do not rely on listed deadlines of March, April, or May – these are too late!

ESSAY

Summer is a great time to work on your personal statement/essay if you did not do it in 11th grade English. Common App and Coalition essay prompts will be available at commonapp.org or coalitionforcollegeaccess.org during the Spring of junior year. Even if you are not applying to a Common App or Coalition App school, they could provide good prompts to use for other schools.

NAVIANCE

To access Naviance, go to <https://student.naviance.com/wissahickon>. To see if a college may be appropriate or not, check out the school's scattergram by looking up a college and clicking the Admissions link (see picture below for an example). On the scattergram, change the SAT to SAT (new/1600) or ACT from the dropdown. Students currently in high school have all taken the SAT (1600).

It would be very helpful to edit your list of "Colleges I'm Thinking About" since you will move these colleges over to "Colleges I'm Applying to" later in the process.

The screenshot shows the Penn State University Park website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a "Next" button. Below it, the university's name and logo are displayed. A "Communicate" button is visible in the top right. The main content area features a navigation menu with tabs for "Overview", "Studies", "Student Life", "Admissions", and "Costs". The "Admissions" tab is circled in red. Below the navigation menu, three key statistics are presented: "GRADUATION RATE" at 86% (within 6 years), "ACCEPTANCE RATE" at 50%, and "COLLEGE OVERLAPS" at 349. Each statistic includes a brief description and a "Learn more" link.

GPA

Your unweighted and weighted GPAs will be updated on Naviance in early July. To see them, go to the About Me and click My Account on the dropdown. Your GPA is listed at the bottom under Academic Information. Colleges will see both the unweighted and weighted GPAs and may recalculate based on their own system.

The screenshot shows the "Academic" section in Naviance. It displays the following information:

Academic	
GPA	3.54
Weighted GPA	3.84

RECOMMENDATIONS

You should have **two** teacher recommendations to submit to colleges. These teachers should be from junior year and include core teachers or subjects related to your intended major. Freshmen and sophomore year teachers are generally not recommended. If you did not already talk to teachers before school ended, then email them over the summer and politely ask that they write you a recommendation. You will need to then officially request them through Naviance. Any non-Wissahickon recommendations should be treated as extra and sent separately through snail mail.

HOW TO REQUEST TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

After you first talk or email with a teacher to confirm that they are ok with writing a recommendation for you, please request them officially through Naviance. Here is how:

1. Log into Student Naviance Account
2. Click on **Colleges** (top right of homepage)
3. Click on **Apply to College**
4. Click on **Letters of Recommendation**
5. Click **Add Requests (Green/Teal Button)**
6. Click the dropdown menu and choose the teacher(s) from the list(make sure you have personally asked this teacher prior to this request)
7. Choose the option allowing **“All current and future colleges I add to my Colleges I’m Applying To list.”** This will allow us to send this letter to any college.
8. Add any notes to the teacher(s) in the box (e.g. “Please mention my passion for Biology and my interest in Medicine.”)
9. Click **Submit Requests** – this will send an email to the teacher stating your request and will add the request to the teacher’s Naviance account. It will also record that you have requested it in your Naviance account. When the teacher has completed the Recommendation, they will mark it as “complete” and it will show in your Naviance account so you can keep track of your application materials.
10. Recommendations from people who do not work at Wissahickon High School must be sent by you or by the writer either through US mail or email.

Note: School counselors will automatically write a recommendation for schools that require it, you do not need to ask them. Be sure to do your Senior Questionnaire on Naviance to provide thorough information for counselors. (see below for more on the “Senior Questionnaire” topic)

STANDARDIZED TESTING - SATs/ACTs

Standardized test scores are sent by the family to each college through Collegeboard.org or ACTstudent.org. Many colleges will take the highest score in each section (e.g. Reading, Math). Rising seniors will have time to take the July/September ACT or August/October SAT. Just make sure to send the scores directly to the schools when you sign up for the tests.

SCHOLARSHIPS

There are three main places to look for scholarships. One of them is the college that you are applying to. They may have special scholarships with special deadlines or requirements. These scholarships will be listed on the admissions page. The second place to look is on third party websites such as FastWeb.com or Raise.me. Some deadlines are early, so look over the summer and be prepared to apply. The third source is on Naviance under **Colleges** and **Scholarships and Money**. These do not get updated until the school year starts.

SENIOR QUESTIONNAIRE

All seniors must fill this out if they need a letter of recommendation from their school counselor. Summer is a great time to do so. It is used for the school counselor recommendations and could be used in the Wissahickon scholarship process. Ideally, the senior questionnaire is finished before school starts. You can find it in Naviance under the **About Me**. Click on **My Surveys** and **Surveys Not Started** (upon returning, click

on Surveys in Progress). Parents can fill out a similar survey called the “Parent Brag Sheet” in their Naviance account following the same directions.



TRANSCRIPTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The counselors will meet with the seniors as a class during the first week of school in the Fall. They will go over the logistics of applying and requesting transcripts/recommendations. We wait to send documents in order to verify that transcripts have correct grades and senior classes. A program for parents will be held during the second week of school to go over the same information. There will also be a paper transcript request form in addition to a Naviance transcript request process. Those details will be given at the meetings over the first weeks of school.