

THE SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD COUNSELING DEPARTMENT PRESENTS:

STEP BY STEP TO COLLEGE PREP



College Process Timeline

The college process is an exciting time that provides opportunity to consider future plans. It is a complex process that requires planning, time and effort. The process begins freshman year and continues through the spring of senior year.



Freshman Year - How we can help...

Individual counseling - Assess progress, discuss importance of rigorous course load and strong grades, encourage extracurricular participation (clubs, sports, music, volunteer work) and future planning.

Naviance - Develop username/password, introduce “tabs” (College, Career, About Me)


Scheduling - Review teacher recommendations, help students develop course requests in PowerSchool, build schedule



Naviance - College and Career Readiness Technology

<https://student.naviance.com/spfhs>

Naviance improves student outcomes by helping students connect their strengths and interests to long-term goals today.

- Research colleges, majors and requirements for admission
 - Access acceptance data relevant to SPFHS applicants
 - Complete career interest inventories
 - Request transcript and teacher recommendation
 - Sign up for college representative visits and counselor hosted events
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Sophomore year - How we can help...

Individual and group counseling - Counselors continue to help students set academic and personal goals. This is a great time for us to get to know our students!

Naviance - Career Interest Survey

College Board - Set up student accounts, introduce free standardized test prep via Khan Academy

PSAT - administered during the school year. Students will be able to retrieve/analyze scores via College Board to start preparing for standardized tests needed for college applications

Scheduling - review teacher recommendations, help students develop Course Requests in PowerSchool, build schedule

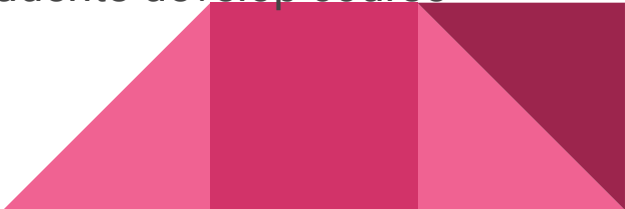


Junior Year - How we can help...

PSAT/NMSQT - Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholar Qualifying Test to be held during the school year. Not necessary for college applications, but if you score well, in comparison to other students nationwide, you may be considered a National Merit Scholar.

Junior Conference - Parents/Guardians, student and counselor meet to discuss college application process. This is an individual opportunity to ask questions. In the meeting we review transcripts, discuss possible major options, begin college search.

Senior Schedule - Review teacher recommendations, help students develop course requests in PowerSchool, build schedule



Senior Year

Complete and send your senior self evaluation and parent input forms to your counselor.

Finalize standardized testing - By senior fall, finish up SAT/ACT

College applications - Work on completing applications during fall and winter. Deadlines are sometimes as early as October.

Finalize letters of recommendation - Follow up with recommenders so letters are submitted on time.

Apply for financial aid and scholarships



Senior Year - How we can help...

Senior Check-In - During these individual meetings we...

Review college lists/post graduation plans

College application platforms and deadlines

Transcript requests

Letters of recommendation


College essays

Sending of SAT/ACT scores




How does a person choose a college?

In deciding where to apply you may consider:

1. Location
 2. Major/Area of study
 3. Cost
 4. Athletics/Extracurricular/Greek Life....
 5. Total Enrollment
 6. Housing
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Things to ask college reps at fairs, college nights, or at a campus visit:

- What is unique about this college?
 - Average class size for a freshmen?
 - What support services are available?
 - What percent of graduates find jobs in their field of study?
 - Scholarships?
 - How to apply to honors programs?
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Creating the Appropriate College List:

Naviance is your best resource!

- *Go to Naviance “college” tab and explore colleges
- *Try the SuperMatch College Search
- *Look at scattergrams to review SPF student data re: student acceptance
- *Use the comparison tool to see how you compare to other SPFHS students



How many schools does
the average SPFHS student apply to?


3 **Reach** (5%-25% chance of acceptance)

3 **Maybe** (26%-60% chance)


3 **Match** (61%+ chance)



Range of criteria to judge an applicant:

- A variety of rigorous courses in academic subjects (GPA)
 - Meaningful electives that reflect personal interests and/or career goals
 - Test scores usually need to align with admissions standards for the school (the bigger the school the more this matters). **Schools will continually update their use of test scores for the class of 2023 and beyond.**
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Applications will also be reviewed holistically:

- Special awards, accomplishments
 - Extracurriculars - **quality not quantity**
 - Essay/Supplements
 - Letters of recommendation
 - Interview (**if available**)
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Types of Applications:

Common Application: Over 1,000 colleges on one application. It is a universal application meant to remove redundancy when filling out multiple applications.

Coalition Application: The Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success is used by more than 150 of the top universities.

Direct to institution: Some colleges/universities utilize their own online application/portal



Types of Decisions:

Early decision: This is a binding agreement, and if accepted, **YOU MUST ATTEND THE COLLEGE**. Deadlines are typically early (October 15 - November 15). Early decision only applies to **one** school.

Early action: Students typically apply early (October 15 - November 15). This is not binding and allows students to continue applying to as many colleges as they choose.

Priority: Similar to early action, deadlines are generally linked to scholarship opportunities. Deadlines typically range between November 1 and December 1.

Rolling admission: No deadline to apply. Schools typically give a decision between 8 to 12 weeks.

Regular decision: Deadlines vary from December 1 to March 1.



Standardized Tests

SAT - www.collegeboard.org

ACT - www.actstudent.org



ACT - www.actstudent.org

Scoring - Composite 1-36

4 Tests - English, Math, Reading, Science

Consult website for test dates and registration deadlines

Reporting scores - Official score reports must be sent to colleges via website



SAT - www.collegeboard.org

Scoring - Composite 400-1600

2 Tests - Reading, Writing & Language; Math

Consult website for test dates and registration deadlines

Prep - www.khanacademy.org; Free prep is tailored to previous PSAT/SAT test scores; offers over 4,000 questions and video lessons.

Reporting scores - Official score reports must be sent to colleges via website




The College Essay at SPFHS

Junior Year

The last writing unit junior year is the college essay. All English teachers explain and model appropriate Common Application essays.

Senior Year

College essays are reviewed in senior academic level English classes when students return to school in September.




Recommendation Letters

The letter of recommendation is another chance for colleges to learn about you as a person.

Teacher letters - Most colleges require two letters; students should plan to ask two teachers by the end of junior year.

Counselor's written evaluation - Most colleges require a counselor letter, which is included in the transcript package. (**Senior Self-Evaluation and Parent Input Sheet due typically at the end of April**)

Optional letters - If the college allows, ask an advisor, mentor, coach or boss to give the college a well-rounded look of who you are.




Transcript

Counselors submit according to FIRST deadline.

Initial Transcript - Initial transcript package includes transcript, school profile, counselor rec letter, necessary forms. Request transcripts via Naviance.

Mid Year Report - Includes grades from the first half of senior year (MP1 and MP2). Automatically sent to all schools, regardless of deadline.

Final Report - The final report confirming high school graduation must be submitted after completion of the Senior Survey on Naviance.



Affording College - Financial Aid

FAFSA - www.fafsa.gov Financial aid form required regardless of the type of school you attend. Parents and students should fill this form out together (asks for information from tax returns in order to determine financial need).

CSS/Financial Aid Profile - <http://css.collegeboard.org/> Additional financial information required by some private schools. A fee is required for submission.




Affording College - Scholarship

Merit Scholarship (traditional scholarship)

Local Scholarships - application comes out in December of the senior year

Other Scholarships

- www.fastweb.com,
 - www.myscholly.com,
 - www.raise.me.com
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Thank you!

Please follow us on Twitter @SPFHSCounseling, on Instagram @spfcounseling, and check the SPFHS website/COUNSELING TAB for important updates & deadlines!

