

February 2, 2023

Dear Junior Parents/Guardians,

This is a very exciting time of year for you and your junior! The college search and application season is just starting. The MATES counselors will be meeting individually with each student to discuss future plans and the college application process in detail throughout the spring.

To help guide you through this process, please use the following college application timeline and information guide as an overview, outlining what you can expect throughout the next year. We recommend printing this document in its entirety so you have it readily available to reference, when needed.

At the end of this document, you will find a student brag sheet (page 18) and parent brag sheet (page 24). Please complete the Parent Brag Sheet and have your child complete the Student Brag Sheet. Your child must return *both documents* to the appropriate counselor by **March 3, 2023.** These two documents are important tools in aiding your child’s counselor in writing a personalized, complete, and accurate letter of recommendation. You may handwrite your responses in the spaces provided or access an editable Word document to type your responses by clicking [here](https://matescounselingdept.weebly.com/college-planning.html). The documents may be found on the bottom right-hand side of the page.

We understand the college application process may seem overwhelming, but we will be there every step of the way to help guide your child through it. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Kate Beacham Julia Giglio-Stork

School Counselor School Counselor

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**General College Application Timeline Overview**

*Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES)*

**JUNIOR YEAR**

**March 3:** Parent and Student Brag Sheets due to your counselor.

**Throughout Spring: J**unior college meeting with your counselor.

**Throughout Spring:** You will be working on your resumes in English class

**End of May:** Request teacher letters of recommendation, when prompted by your counselor to do so. We will talk more about this in our meetings.

**Summer:** Consider an internship, summer job, college course, etc. to strengthen

your resume (optional).

Consider registering for the August SAT administration (optional) or July ACT (optional).

Work on your college essays as your English summer assignment.

**August 1:** Create your Common Application account and begin working on it. It is recommended you complete as much of it as possible before your senior year begins.

**Ongoing:** Visit colleges that interest you.

Update your Naviance list with schools of interest.

Register for SAT and/or ACT (recommended to take SAT at least once, preferably twice before the end of your junior year).

**SENIOR YEAR**

**September:**  Complete a transcript request form from Guidance.

Waive your right to read your recommendations (FERPA rights) on the Common Application.

Match your Common Application and your Naviance account by entering your Common Application login information on your Naviance Student account.

**October/November:** Deadlines for requesting transcripts for Early Action/Decision (ED/ED) applications.

Completed applications and essays submitted to all schools with EA/ED deadlines.

**Ongoing:** After early application deadlines, additional colleges may be added, if desired.

For each college you add, you must update your Naviance list, re-request teacher letters of recommendation through Naviance, and request transcripts BOTH on Naviance and with a paper transcript request form.

Monitor your email closely and continue checking the “Scholarship” Page on Naviance for scholarship opportunities.

**College Application Information Guide for Parents**

*Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES)*

**I want to apply to college. What should I be doing right now?**

Your counselor will meet with you for your formal college meeting in the spring. In the meantime, students applying to four-year schools should be working on the following areas:

1. Start visiting schools that interest you

2. Update Naviance by listing the schools you are considering applying to (email your counselor if you need your password reset)

3. Register to take your SATs this spring ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com))

4. Consider taking the ACTs ([www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org))

* Visit <https://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-act> for a side-by-side comparison of both tests

5. Fill out the enclosed parent and student brag sheet and return to Guidance by March 3.

**How do I get teacher recommendations?**

Start thinking about who you will ask. You will be requesting letters from only two teachers. If a school or program requires more than that, please let your counselor know. DO NOT request any letters from teachers before you are told to do so by your counselor (approximately late May). Here are a few points to consider when deciding who to ask:

* + We highly recommend requesting letters from teachers of two different subject areas; colleges sometimes require one from a humanities teacher.
  + Take note of what specific letters your colleges of interest are requesting. For example, a college may request a specific subject area or grade level.
  + Teacher recommendations are preferably from teachers you had recently (junior year).
  + Consider teachers who can write something great about you and provide information about your strengths as a student and an individual.
  + Perhaps you may want to choose to ask a teacher who you’ve also worked closely with in some other fashion (i.e. as a club advisor, research, volunteer opportunities, etc.)
  + Consider your anticipated program/major. For example, a student planning to enter a medical field, may want to request a letter from a science teacher.

Once your counselor advises you to do so, approach teachers to request a recommendation letter **in person**. If a teacher agrees to write on your behalf, have them sign your Teacher Letter of Recommendation Request Form (to be given to you at a later date). You will be given two teacher brag sheets to complete and give to your chosen recommenders to assist them in writing your letter.

You will also be required to submit electronic requests through Naviance once you know where you are applying. Remember to request letters from teachers **at least** one month prior to a deadline. More information on how/when to do this will follow.

For those of you who wish to supplement your application with a letter from an outside source (such as a scout leader or first aid squad leader), there is a field on the Common Application to do this. However, please remain mindful of how many letters the college is requesting. You do not want to send more than the college wants.

**Caution:** Too many recommendations may reduce the enthusiasm of an admissions officer to evaluate each one objectively. Most colleges do not require more than *2 teacher letters of recommendation*. Please limit your number of recommendations to align with the college’s requests.

**What can I do over the summer?**

1. Continue visiting the schools you’re interested in applying to.
2. Register for the August SAT administration (optional).
3. Narrow down your list on Naviance to 5 to 7 schools you are applying to. Move the schools from ‘”colleges I’m thinking about” to “colleges I’m applying to”.
4. College applications are generally released August 1, so start filling them out early.
5. Make a Common Application account **after** August 1st. ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)).
6. Fill out the FERPA form on your Common Application. After you are done with the FERPA form, log onto your Naviance account and click on “colleges I’m applying to” and **match** your common application with your Naviance account by entering your Common Application log-in information.
7. When you update your Naviance account with your colleges be sure to update your Common Application account and vice versa.
8. Start drafting your college essays (more information to come from your English teacher).

**It’s September of my senior year, now what?**

1. Visit your counselor to pick up a transcript request form, located in the hanging paper rack outside the Counseling Wing or on the Counseling Department website.
2. Fill out the form to include all the schools you are applying to, how you are choosing to apply, and the application deadlines.
3. Make sure your Naviance and Common Application accounts are updated with your correct list, your FERPA form is completed, and your accounts are matched.
4. Submit digital requests on Naviance for recommendations to your teachers you had asked for letters in June.
5. If you have Early Application or Early Decision deadlines of November 1st or November 15th, transcript request forms must be completed and returned to your counselor by October 13th. Transcript requests for October 15th deadlines must be submitted to your counselor by September 29th.Please see your counselor if you have any earlier deadlines.

**How do I request for transcripts to be sent?**

You must submit a BOTH a paper transcript request form and Naviance request to your counselor. You can add up to 7 schools per paper form and may use as many forms as needed. Extra copies can be found in the rack of papers outside the main Counseling Wing door or on our Counseling Department website.

Upon receiving a transcript request, your counselor will send your transcript and any other requested materials out prior to the listed due dates. Please be certain to allow enough time for your requests to be processed. Application deadlines may not be honored if requests are not provided to counselors a minimum of ten school days prior to a deadline.

You will be able to see which schools are our electronic partners through Naviance and which are not by checking the icons on the Naviance website. When you list a school under “colleges I’m applying to” or “colleges I’m thinking about”,you will see a picture icon next to the school name under the heading of “delivery type”. If the picture is of a blue computer screen, your transcripts, and letters can be sent electronically. If the picture is a red stamp, your materials will be mailed. If the college accepts recommendations by mail only please provide your teachers and counselor with stamped envelopes addressed to the admissions offices of each college you would like to receive your letters and transcripts. Additionally, if a mail-in school requires a form or checklist from teachers, be sure to provide them with those forms.

**Where do I find and complete my applications?**

Colleges may use individual school applications or accept the Common Application. Nearly all applications may be accessed and submitted online.

Common Application: accepted by over 1,000 schools, this application may be completed once and sent to numerous recipients. Be certain to check for school supplements (materials required for certain institutions) in addition to the core of the Common Application. This application can be found at www.commonapp.org. Proofread applications and essays thoroughly prior to submission and submit any required application fees. Print and keep a copy of each application you send for your records.

**Do I have to take SAT/ACT if the colleges I’m applying to are test-optional?**

Although many colleges are extending their test-optional policy, we highly recommend you still try to register for these assessments as if that policy were not in place. It is better to have the option to send scores than to have no scores at all! Your decision of whether or not to send your scores depends on many factors including how your scores align with historical averages of that college, the strength of your application without scores, etc. Furthermore, many test-optional colleges and universities still require scores in order to be considered for scholarships opportunities. If you want further guidance on whether or not to send your scores, please see your counselor.

**How do I send my standardized test scores?**

Standardized test scores are **not** submitted to colleges by your counselor. It is YOUR responsibility to send your scores.

To send official copies: SAT or AP‐visit www.collegeboard.org (please note SAT and AP reports are two separate requests) ACT‐visit www.act.org

Student athletes must arrange to have test scores sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse and notify your counselor so a transcript may be sent at the conclusion of the junior and senior years.

**What if I want to play sports in college?**

Visit [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) for more information.

**How to Recalculate Your GPA for College Admission:**

Many colleges recalculate your GPA (grade point average) using a 4.0 scale, and then add bonus points for AP, IB, AICE, dual enrollment/college and honors classes to arrive at a modified GPA or HPA (honors point average). While each college has its own methodology, and some schools share the “formula” with prospective applicants, the top grade of an A typically corresponds with a 4.0. Usually only “academic classes” are part of the GPA recalculation, so electives and non-core classes such as health, PE and drama are generally not included. Many colleges use a GPA boosting methodology (e.g. quality point’s calculation) to give students additional “credit” for taking more challenging classes. You can use the table below for a general estimate. Some colleges and universities use a minimum grade threshold (often a C) for additional GPA weighting.

* Dual College Enrollment (Entry Level) +0.5
* Dual College Enrollment (Higher Level) +1.0
* Honors +0.5
* AP +1.0

**How do I find out about scholarship opportunities?**

All scholarship opportunities that are passed along to our guidance department will be listed on Naviance for seniors to access. Additionally, we encourage you to reach out to your home school’s guidance department to see which scholarships you may qualify for through them. While you may be excluded from some of your home school’s academic scholarships, you may qualify for others, including local scholarships specific to town residents.

Make sure to continue checking the Naviance scholarship list throughout the entirety of your senior year. Although you will see a rush of scholarship opportunities beginning in late winter/early spring, some scholarships may be available sooner with earlier deadlines, so it is important to check periodically.

**Early Action/Early Decision: What you need to know.**

Many colleges and universities offer early admission programs such as Early Action and Early Decision. It’s not unusual for competitive schools to admit a large percentage of the class through these programs. Within the Ivy League, early applicants comprise 18% to 41% of students at Brown, Penn, Columbia, Cornell and Dartmouth.  Acceptance rates for early programs are typically significantly higher than for regular admission. In addition to improving your chances for acceptance, being admitted early (usually in December) can reduce senior year stress. But there can be downside as well, especially for those concerned about financial aid.  If you are considering applying early, here is what you need to know:

**Admission Statistics Don’t Tell the Full Story**

* At the University of Pennsylvania, Early Decision applicants comprise more than 45% of recent classes.  Penn’s acceptance rate for Early Decision is in the neighborhood of 30% compared to 14%-17% for regular admission.  These admission statistics convey only part of the story.   At Penn, legacies (children of Penn alumni) comprise about 15% of Early Decision candidates and nearly half of those are typically admitted.  When assessing the likelihood of your admission, don’t rely on admission percentages alone.  It’s important to consider factors such as legacy applicants and recruited athletes, because the admissions rate for everyone else can be considerably lower.

**Early Admission Programs Are Not All the Same**

* The two most common types of Early Admission programs are Early Action (EA) and Early Decision (ED).   Some Early Action programs are non-restrictive.  That’s not the case for Early Decision and Single-Choice Early Action.  You’ll find nuances and different rules for different schools. Make sure you understand the policies and obligations.

**Early Decision**

* Early Decision plans are almost always single choice (i.e. you agree not to apply ED to any other schools) and binding (i.e. you agree to attend the college if you are accepted ED, regardless of the financials).  Generally, if you are accepted Early Decision, you are required to withdraw all other applications. A major drawback to being admitted ED is limited leverage when negotiating your financial aid package.  From a statistical perspective, applicants with similar credentials are almost always more likely to be admitted when they apply ED. If you have financial concerns, Early Decision is not recommended.

**Early Action**

* Early Action generally means you can apply to as many schools as you like; and if you are accepted (EA), there is no obligation to attend.  You typically have until May 1 to respond with your decision.  This gives you time to compare financial aid offers and evaluate your options.  MIT, University of Chicago and many other schools have unrestricted Early Action programs.  If your application and credentials are ready by the deadline, there is generally no downside when applying unrestricted EA.

**Single Choice Early Action**

* Single-Choice Early Action (SCEA) programs are another matter.   Like unrestricted Early Action, SCEA applicants receive early notification (or deferral) without a binding obligation.  Generally, students are free to apply (regular action) to other schools and to compare financial aid offers.   However, SCEA programs usually require students not to apply ED or EA to any other schools.

**Financial Aid**

* If financial aid is an issue, and you wish to compare financial aid packages before deciding on a college, then Early Decision is probably not a good option for you.  Some colleges, including Harvard, have discontinued their early application programs due to concern that these plans disadvantage students who rely on financial aid.

**Yield Considerations**

* College admissions officers focus on yield (percentage of students who accept their offer of admission) and generally prefer a well-qualified applicant who they consider likely to attend over an exceptionally qualified candidate who they believe would probably choose not to enroll.  Binding ED programs directly impact yield as admitted students are required to enroll.  Early Action programs, while not binding, also enhance yield.  Many EA schools devote significant resources to courting admitted students, many of whom might otherwise enroll elsewhere.

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**Admission Statistics: Acceptance Rates – Early vs. Regular:**

Many colleges and universities continue to offer early action and early decision programs.  When considering early vs. regular admission options, applicants should keep in mind recent acceptance rates for those applying early vs. regular admission.  The acceptance rate differential has been significant at many colleges and universities including: Bowdoin, Boston College, Brown, Columbia University, Cornell, Dartmouth, Duke, Northwestern, Stanford, Williams College, Wellesley, and Yale.

With early action, students can apply for early notification without having to make a binding commitment.  Early action and early decision applicants generally learn by year end whether they’ve been accepted, rejected or deferred to the regular admissions pool.  U.S. News compiled two lists of interest to those considering early action and early decision:

* “Colleges Where Applying Early Action Helps”
* “Colleges Where Applying Early Decision Helps”

The chart below contains selected information (based on recent years) from U.S. News.  Consult U.S. News, Specific College and University Web Sites and the Common Data Set for confirmation and additional information.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| College or University | State | Early Program | Early Accept % | Overall Accept % | Difference |
| American University | DC | ED | 75% | 53% | 22% |
| Barnard College | NY | ED | 48% | 29% | 19% |
| Bates College | ME | ED | 46% | 29% | 16% |
| Boston College | MA | EA | 36% | 26% | 10% |
| Bowdoin College | ME | ED | 30% | 19% | 11% |
| Brandeis University | MA | ED | 53% | 32% | 21% |
| Brandeis University | MA | EA | 40% | 32% | 8% |
| Brown University | PA | ED | 23% | 14% | 9% |
| Bryn Mawr College | PA | ED | 53% | 49% | 4% |
| Bucknell University | PA | ED | 65% | 30% | 35% |
| California Institute of Technology | CA | EA | 27% | 17% | 9% |
| Carleton College | MN | ED | 55% | 28% | 28% |
| Case Western Reserve University | OH | EA | 89% | 73% | 15% |
| Claremont McKenna College | CA | ED | 28% | 19% | 9% |
| Clark University | MA | ED | 73% | 56% | 17% |
| Colby College | ME | ED | 47% | 31% | 16% |
| Colgate University | NY | ED | 51% | 24% | 27% |
| College of the Holy Cross | MA | ED | 56% | 34% | 22% |
| College of William and Mary | VA | ED | 54% | 34% | 20% |
| Columbia University | NY | ED | 24% | 10% | 14% |
| Connecticut College | CT | ED | 65% | 37% | 28% |
| Cooper Union | NT | ED | 16% | 9% | 7% |
| Cornell University | NY | ED | 37% | 21% | 16% |
| Dartmouth College | NH | ED | 28% | 14% | 14% |
| Davidson College | NC | ED | 40% | 26% | 15% |
| Denison University | OH | ED | 78% | 38% | 40% |
| DePauw University | IN | ED | 82% | 65% | 17% |
| Duke University | NC | ED | 38% | 22% | 16% |
| Elon University | NC | ED | 75% | 42% | 33% |
| Emerson College | MA | EA | 47% | 37% | 10% |
| Flagler College | FL | ED | 73% | 45% | 28% |
| Franklin and Marshall College | PA | ED | 70% | 36% | 35% |
| Furman University | SC | ED | 66% | 57% | 9% |
| George Washington University | DC | ED | 67% | 37% | 29% |
| Grinnell College | IA | ED | 69% | 43% | 26% |
| Hamilton College | NY | ED | 36% | 28% | 8% |
| Hampshire College | MA | ED | 71% | 53% | 18% |
| Harvey Mudd College | CA | ED | 34% | 31% | 3% |
| Hobart and William Smith | NY | ED | 68% | 54% | 15% |
| Howard University | DC | ED | 71% | 49% | 23% |
| Kenyon College | OH | ED | 55% | 31% | 24% |
| Lafayette College | PA | ED | 56% | 37% | 19% |
| Lehigh University | PA | ED | 58% | 28% | 30% |
| MIT | MA | EA | 13% | 12% | 1% |
| Northeastern University | MA | EA | 48% | 35% | 13% |
| Northwestern University | IL | ED | 40% | 26% | 14% |
| Pomona College | CA | ED | 22% | 16% | 6% |
| Pratt Institute | NY | EA | 79% | 42% | 37% |
| Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute | NY | ED | 50% | 44% | 6% |
| Rhode Island School of Design | RI | EA | 37% | 29% | 8% |
| Rice University | TX | ED | 34% | 23% | 11% |
| Skidmore College | NY | ED | 59% | 30% | 30% |
| Smith College | MA | ED | 64% | 48% | 16% |
| Stanford University | CA | EA | 16% | 10% | 7% |
| Stetson University | FL | ED | 91% | 54% | 37% |
| Stevens Institute of Technology | NJ | ED | 70% | 52% | 18% |
| SUNY College–Oneonta | NY | EA | 50% | 37% | 12% |
| Swarthmore College | PA | ED | 34% | 16% | 18% |
| Syracuse University | NY | ED | 77% | 53% | 25% |
| Trinity College | CT | ED | 69% | 42% | 28% |
| Tulane University | LA | EA | 66% | 27% | 39% |
| Union College | NY | ED | 77% | 39% | 38% |
| University of Connecticut | CT | EA | 70% | 55% | 16% |
| University of Georgia | GA | EA | 66% | 56% | 10% |
| University of Miami | FL | EA | 52% | 39% | 14% |
| U N C –Chapel Hill | NC | EA | 43% | 34% | 9% |
| University of Notre Dame | IN | EA | 42% | 27% | 16% |
| Vanderbilt University | TN | ED | 36% | 25% | 11% |
| Vassar College | NY | ED | 38% | 25% | 13% |
| Wellesley College | MA | ED | 51% | 36% | 15% |
| Wesleyan University | CT | ED | 46% | 27% | 18% |
| Wheaton College | MA | ED | 86% | 39% | 47% |
| Williams College | MA | ED | 37% | 17% | 20% |
| Yale University | CT | EA | 18% | 9% | 10% |

 As reported in The College Finder, in recent years, a number of leading colleges accepted a large percentage of the freshman class through early decision:

* Cornell (41%)
* U of Penn (32%)
* Columbia (25%)
* Brown (22%)
* Williams (19%)
* Dartmouth (18%)
* Bowdoin (17%)
* Swarthmore (17%)
* Middlebury (16%)
* Colby (15%)
* Colgate (15%)
* Barnard (15%)
* Wesleyan (14%)
* Johns Hopkins (13%)
* Duke (11%)
* Emory (11%)
* Tufts (10%)

[The College Finder: Choose the School That’s Right for You!](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1933119861?ie=UTF8&tag=in0f4-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1933119861)

[**Beating The Admissions Odds: 10 Tips Every Applicant Should Know**](http://inlikeme.com/beating-the-admissions-odds-11-tips-every-applicant-should-know/)

Colleges and universities around the nation reported record applications, and record-low acceptance rates, again this year. Many experts believe this new paradigm reflects the ease of using the Common Application.

Acceptance rates in the neighborhood of 6 percent continue to dominate the headlines.

While there’s no getting around the surge in college applications, there are ways for savvy students to improve their admissions odds.

* 1. **Be A Legacy**

While you can’t pick your parents, you may be able to pick your parent’s school. It is not unusual for legacy applicants to be granted admission at rates several times higher than the overall pool.

Harvard Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, William R. Fitzsimmons, ’67 told The Harvard Crimson that the college’s acceptance rate for legacies has hovered around 30 percent—more than four times the regular admission rate—in recent admissions cycles. Fitzsimmons also said that Harvard’s undergraduate population is comprised of approximately 12 to 13 percent legacies, a group he defined as children of Harvard College alumni and Radcliffe College alumnae. (The figure may be significantly higher had children of Harvard graduate school alumni been included, along with the children of Harvard University employees.) Fitzsimmons told the Crimson that legacy status, in addition to factors such as place of residence, acts as one of many “tips” in the admissions process at Harvard. All other things being substantially equal, he said, legacy status can “tip” an applicant into the group of accepted students.

Harvard is not alone in granting admission to legacy applicants at a more favorable rate. The children of alumni generally make up 10 to 25 percent of the student body at selective institutions. Richard D. Kahlenberg drew attention to the issue of legacy admissions in a book he edited entitled [Affirmative Action for the Rich: Legacy Preferences in College Admissions](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0870785184/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=in0f4-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399353&creativeASIN=0870785184).  A study conducted by Princeton’s Thomas Espenshade, showed that legacy status added the equivalent of 160 SAT points (on the old 1600-point SAT scale) to a candidate’s test score. William Bowen, of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and colleagues found that, within a given SAT-score range, being a legacy increased an applicant’s chances of admission to a selective institution by nearly 20 percentage points. Based on this formula a student whose other factors placed him in the 40-percent chance of admissions category would have nearly a 60-percent chance if he/she were a legacy.

* 1. **Apply Early**

If you have decided conclusively on a first-choice college, and your credentials are ready, applying Early Decision can give you a significant advantage in the admissions process. For schools that offer Early Decision, it is not unusual for admission rates to be 2 to 3 times higher for ED applicants than for the regular decision pool. Some schools post these admission stats on their web sites. Sometimes you’ll find this information published in articles in the student newspaper. While some admissions officers have stated that early applicants tend to be better qualified, admission experts generally agree that there is still a meaningful advantage to applying early at most schools.

While your best shot is generally at schools with binding ED programs, you still can often improve your odds by applying Early Action or early in the rolling admissions process.

* 1. **Demonstrate Interest**

High on the priority list at most college admissions offices is “yield”. Yield is the percentage of admitted students who enroll. It is considered a measure of the school’s desirability and is a factor in most of the popular college rankings. Colleges can increase their yield by admitting more students through early decision programs (close to 100% typically enroll) and by extending offers of admission to students who they consider more likely to attend because they have demonstrated high levels of interest.

“Demonstrated Interest” is a relative term and a source of confusion to many applicants. Whereas GPA, standardized test scores and activities are relatively tangible, the meaning and perceived value of “level of interest” differs by institution.

Many schools place a moderate or high value on “level of interest” while other colleges state that it is does not factor into their admissions equation. You may find clues about how individual institutions value demonstrated interest on the school’s web site.

There are many ways for students to demonstrate interest without going overboard and making a negative impression or annoying the admissions staff. These include: joining the school’s mailing list; writing strong college-specific supplemental essays that include specific (well researched) features and programs of the institution that appeal to you; visiting the school (make sure you sign in); a productive (carefully crafted, without pestering) email dialog with an admissions officer, coach or professor; an on-campus or alumni interview (even when optional); in-person conversation and follow-up at college fairs and high school visits (remember to leave your name, contact information and resume, if you have one prepared); sending a well-written thank you note (email or hand-written); and applying early.

Don’t be afraid to contact a university if you are looking for additional information not available on the school’s web site. Many universities make a record of personal contact, and may use it in their decision-making.

* 1. **Excel on the SAT & ACT**

While most U.S. colleges and universities use a holistic admissions process, standardized test scores are an important factor at the majority of institutions and are considered a measure of the school’s selectivity. Compiled scores (i.e. 25th, 50th, 75th percentile) can often be found on the institution’s admissions web site and in various guidebooks.

What many applicants don’t know is that a large number of institutions “super score” (utilize the applicant’s highest section scores from all testing dates) for evaluative and reporting purposes, giving those who improve their scores by taking the test(s) multiple students a possible advantage. Often the standardized test policy can be found on the admissions web site.

Students interested in attending institutions that “super score” often gain an advantage by taking both the SAT and ACT multiple times. Understanding the score use and reporting requirement for all the schools you are considering is important when evaluating this strategy.

* 1. **Differentiate Yourself — Your Hook**

Most U.S. colleges and universities seek a diverse student body. Geographic diversity is considered important at most institutions which can favor applicants from less represented areas. Background, experiences, talents and interests are other areas of diversity. Having a desirable “hook” can help you stand out from the competition.

* 1. **Perfect Your Essays**

Plan, carefully draft, and ask someone to proofread your personal statements. Make them interesting, appropriate and enjoyable to read! Give concrete examples of things you’ve done to back up your claims. Make sure your essays portray you in a positive manner and allow the readers to get to know you. A compelling essay should leave the reader thinking, “This applicant is likable; he/she would be an asset on campus and a great fit for our school.”

* 1. **Check Your Application for Accuracy and Consistency**

“And that’s why I am interested in studying biomedical engineering at XYZ.” Sounds good? Well, XYZ University doesn’t offer biomedical engineering. Worse yet, the essay was sent to ABC College. Admissions staffers will tell you it is not unusual for applicants to craft and recycle essays without carefully reviewing the contents. Essays that contain incorrect assumptions are not uncommon. Mistakes resulting from poor preparation often lead to rejection.

* 1. **Proofread Your Application**

Often, students are so eager to submit their applications that they don’t take the time to review them carefully. Admissions officers are known to share amusing examples of glaring errors that may indicate a lack of attentiveness, maturity, or interest. One student completed the entire application in lower case. Another student wrote that he was “Predator” of the high school newspaper. Keep in mind that spell check programs miss many mistakes!!

* 1. **Don’t Slack Off During Senior Year**

When admissions officers are on the fence about an applicant, senior year performance is known to make a difference. The student pursuing a challenging curriculum with strong grades is likely to be selected over someone less ambitious or accomplished. Keeping up the momentum during senior year can also land you in the admit pile from the wait list. Students usually don’t think of the wait list when they apply for admission, but given the large number of applications and hard-to-predict enrollment, the wait list is a key component of the new paradigm!

* 1. **Take Interviews Seriously**

Many colleges and universities offer admission interviews. They vary by school — “optional”, “on-campus”, “alumni”, “informational”, “evaluative”, “combination informational / evaluative”. (This information is generally available on a school’s web site.) Regardless of how the interview is described, it is at the very least an opportunity to convey your interest and enthusiasm, as well as to make a positive impression. Prepare as if you were applying for a job. Consider what questions you’ll be asked in advance, and come prepared with a list of appropriate questions. Don’t ask for information easily obtained by researching the school. Interviewers usually submit a report that is used for admissions purposes. At many schools, students who interview are admitted at a significantly higher rate. Check the school’s web site in advance for information about scheduling an interview. Some institutions have deadlines that are easy to miss. Scheduling an interview at the last minute may telegraph to the school that it is not your top choice, and that you would be less likely to enroll if admitted.

**Student’s Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **DUE:** March 3, 2023

**Student Brag Sheet**

Dear Junior,

To assist in writing an accurate and detailed letter of recommendation for the college(s) to which you are applying, please carefully and thoroughly complete the following. Please type or print neatly, and make a photocopy of these pages for yourself.

Make sure to give these questions serious thought. Your answers should be understandable and readable. Letters of recommendation are a crucial part of your application, as they are often what set you apart from other applicants. Your letter of recommendation will mirror the effort and work you put into this questionnaire.

This document is to be filled out and returned to your counselor by **March 3rd**. You may make updates to this document at any point throughout the remainder of your junior year and your senior year.

Please note, this Student Brag Sheet is intended for use by your high school counselor only, and will not be shared with other MATES staff or students unless you have given us permission to do so.

If you have a question, stop by the office and/or make an appointment.

Sincerely,

MATES Guidance Department

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Intended Major: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Intended Minor (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Expected Career: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Current GPA: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2 teachers from whom you are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

considering requesting

letters of recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Colleges to which I might apply:**

**College/University Name Application Type Visited**

**(EA, ED, etc.) Campus?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SAT Test scores:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | CR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | M \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Total \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | CR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | M \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Total \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | CR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | M \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Total \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **ACT:**  Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Composite Score \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ w/Writing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Composite Score \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ w/Writing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

1. Briefly touch upon your involvement in our MATES community (e.g. clubs, research, volunteer work, etc.).
2. Briefly touch upon your involvement in your home school (e.g. clubs, sports, music, etc.).
3. Briefly touch upon your contributions to/involvement in your community (e.g. scouts, volunteer work, employment, etc.)
4. What are your current career goals? How do they shape your choice of college major and post-secondary plans?
5. What do you like to do with your free time? (Example: karate, theater, volunteering, sports, dance, etc.).

1. What 3 adjectives would you use to describe yourself?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What 3 adjectives would a teacher use to describe you?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What 3 adjectives would a friend use to describe you?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What 3 adjectives would your coach/advisor use to describe you? (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What have you accomplished that makes you feel good or proud of yourself? Please describe in detail.
2. Do you want to remind me of a course conflict/struggle, specific grade, or academic incident that you would want mentioned in your recommendation? How did you overcome this?
3. What changes or particular situations have occurred in your high school years that may have influenced you, your grades, or your participation in school? (Example: illness in family or self, divorce, summer experience, volunteers work, etc.) Are you open to me sharing this information in your letter? yes\_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ (check one)
4. Have you experienced any significant disturbances, obstacles, etc. related to the pandemic that you would like me to be aware of? Are you open to me sharing this information in your letter? yes\_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ (check one)
5. What are your strengths – personal traits, academic talents, athletic strengths, and accomplishments, etc.?
6. If a college were required to make an admission decision between you and someone else that appears to have equal credentials, what evidence can you present that would encourage them to consider you?
7. If your counselor arrived at MATES this year and met over 300 students, how could she remember **YOU**?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student Signature | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Date | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Parent Signature | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Date | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

**STUDENT’S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DUE:** March 3, 2023

**PARENT BRAG SHEET**

Now is your time to brag! Over the past three years, you have watched your child mature and develop throughout high school. Now you have the opportunity to give your views/reactions through the questions below. When appropriate, this information will be included in your child’s letter of recommendation. If you would like to add information, please feel free to write on the other side or attach another sheet. Please have your child submit this sheet with their individual brag sheet to their respective counselor.

We look forward to your input.

1. During high school, what outstanding accomplishments has your child achieved? Why are these significant?
2. In what area has your child shown the most development and growth over the past three years?
3. What outstanding personality traits do you see in your child?
4. What five adjectives would you use to describe your child and why?
5. Are there any unusual or personal circumstances (positive or negative) that have affected your child’s education or personal development? This may also include any challenges or obstacles related to the pandemic. Please describe. May we include this in your child’s letter? \_\_\_ YES \_\_\_NO (check one)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Parent Signature | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Student Signature | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |