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THE LAB SCHOOL FOR GIRLS  
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# **Junior Parent College Info Night**

Student Support Services

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Mary Raftery - Director of Student Support Services  
Sarah Stiglianese - School Counselor

# Today's Agenda

- Junior Year
- College Admissions Tests: SAT and ACT
- The College Search
- College Application Preparation and Process
- Financial Aid Basics
- Q & A

# Counselor's Role

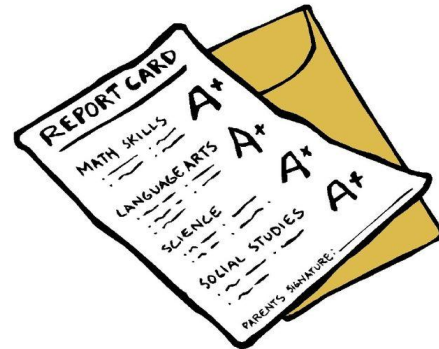
- Help students find colleges that match current interests and abilities or “best fit”
- Help create a balanced list
- Provide answers to questions along the way
- Help facilitate family communication
- Encourage students to take primary responsibility for the process



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
APPLY TO  
COLLEGE**

# Junior Year: Strong Academics

- Junior year grades are important because they are the last grades calculated for a cumulative GPA shown on transcripts sent to colleges.
- Colleges look at **grade trends** – hopefully upward trends! How a student does in 11th grade is more important than how a student did in 9th.



# Junior Year: GET INVOLVED

We encourage students to be meaningfully involved, and develop leadership roles, in at least one extracurricular.

- FHA Clubs and Sports
- Community organizations
- Community service
- Faith-based groups
- Consider part-time employment for students who have the time

# SAT AND ACT

- The SAT/ACT Testing Plan for Students
  - Plan A: Take *both* tests **Junior year**; compare; study; retake strongest test
  - Plan B: Take SAT *or* ACT **Junior year**; review scores; study; retake
- Many schools are remaining test optional. Something to consider.



# Why plan to take the SAT or ACT again?

- Possibility of more scholarship opportunities
- Most colleges will superscore the SAT (some colleges superscore ACT)
  - Jan. EBRW: 510 Math: 490 {1000}
  - March EBWR: 490 Math: 540 {1030}
  - Superscore will be 1050, which is the score colleges will review

# College Search

- During Junior Year, students compile a long list of schools to which they might apply. This is not a final list, this list should be extensive. The more options, the better!
  - Students will have completed college search activities
  - Students should have a running list of foundational, target, and reach schools that they are interested in.
- To find schools to add to their lists, students should explore their own preferences, make-or-break criteria, and their academic data.



# College Criteria

- College Type
  - Public / Private
- Location
  - In-state / Out-of-state
  - Urban / Suburban / Rural
  - Distance from home
- Cost
  - In-state / Out-of-state
  - Scholarships - Grants - Loans
- Campus Characteristics
  - Class size
  - Professors / TAs
  - Research focus
  - Campus activities / extracurriculars / athletics
- Demographics
  - Religious Affiliation
  - Diversity
  - Gender ratios
- Housing Options
  - On campus / commuter
  - Dorms
  - Fraternities / Sororities

# How to Find Colleges that Meet Your Criteria

- Online searches
  - College Board – [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) (Click on College Search – BigFuture)
  - ACT – [www.act.org/collegesearch](http://www.act.org/collegesearch)
  - Peterson’s College Search – [www.Petersons.com](http://www.Petersons.com)
  - Naviance college search
- Colleges that Change Lives: <http://www.ctcl.org/colleges/list>
- US News & World Report Rankings
- Peer Mentors

# College Majors

- Career Assessments
- Online research
- Job Shadowing
- Favorite classes / subject areas / hobbies / passions / talents
- Summer jobs
- It is okay to be an 'undeclared' applicant
  - Half of college students change their majors 1-3 times.
  - Please note, scholarship money can be tied to specific programs.

# College Applications

- Applications aren't available until August 1 of a student's senior year
- There are several pieces of the application:
  - Transcript
  - GPA
  - Test Scores
  - Honors / Awards
  - Extra-curricular activities
  - Leadership roles
  - Community involvement / service
  - Summer experiences
  - Jobs / Internships
  - Disciplinary / Attendance Concerns
  - Letters of Recommendation
  - Essay



# The Common Application

- Many schools participate in the Common Application and it's linked to Naviance. For each school that participates, you will be able to apply via your one application. Some schools will require a supplement (additional essay) or two along with the basic Common App.
- You can apply to up to 20 schools via your Common Application. **No one should be applying to 20 schools.** It is way too many.

# Other Applications

- The SUNY Application
  - Similar in concept to the Common Application, but for SUNY (State University of New York) schools. You can apply to multiple SUNY schools using one application. Some will require supplements. ALL SUNY schools use the Common Application.
- The CUNY Application
  - Once again, like the Common App and the SUNY App, but for CUNY (City University of New York) schools. You can apply to multiple CUNY schools using one application.
- The Coalition Application
  - Used by larger institutions, similar to Common App

# Early Decision and Early Action

- **Early decision** plans are **binding** — a student who is accepted as an ED applicant must attend the college.
- **Early action** plans are **non-binding** — students receive an **early** response to their application but do not have to commit to the college until the normal reply date of May 1

# Can Students Apply Regular Decision?

YES!

- Not everyone is prepared to get a quality application out in time to meet an early deadline, which can be as early as October 15.
  - A poorly crafted essay along with hastily prepared recommendations will not contribute to a strong application.
- Not everyone is absolutely certain that they have found the school that they would want to attend above all others with enough certainty to commit themselves to that process.
- Some schools don't offer EA or ED, and because for some schools that do, the advantage isn't particularly pronounced.



# Regular and Rolling Admissions

- Regular Decision
  - Schools will have a deadline, usually sometime in January.
- Rolling Admission
  - The school will not have a specific deadline, but when their class is full they will no longer process applications
  - Schools may take a well-crafted application from a qualified candidate more seriously if they receive it earlier rather than later.
  - Rolling Admission schools – if you wait too long, your application may not be considered at all.

# When should applications be completed?

- ALL SENIORS ARE STRONGLY URGED TO COMPLETE THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS PRIOR TO THE DECEMBER BREAK. MEANING, YOU SHOULD HAVE SUBMITTED ALL OF YOUR APPLICATIONS BY DECEMBER 1ST.

# What are students responsible for?

- Application and fee
- Essay and any supplemental essays
- FAFSA & CSS Profile if applicable
- Asking for teacher recommendations
  - Two – from core academic teachers
  - **Students will ask teachers to write these for you**, and they will upload them into Naviance. **We will be responsible for sending them out.** But remember: students are responsible for finding teachers who will write them and following up to be sure that they have done so.
- SAT and or ACT test scores.
  - Students are responsible for requesting these from the College Board and/or ACT. Students must submit a request to have these sent to the colleges to which they are applying.

# What are WE responsible for?

- Counselor recommendation
- School Profile
- Initial transcript
- Mid-Year transcript
- Final transcript (which will never get there if you don't tell us where you have decided to attend)

# Demonstrate Interest

- Plan on visiting colleges and college fairs.
- Encourage students to introduce themselves to admissions reps
- Consistently email admission reps questions
- Have students ask questions that demonstrate genuine interest, meaning that they have done their homework and know quite a bit about the school before they even meet the rep.
  - If you have a question – the STUDENT should call or email the school and ask!

# Finding Ways to Pay for College

- Merit-Based Scholarships and Grants - Colleges and outside sources; do not have to repay
  - **Raise.me** will show you what merit based scholarships you may receive at certain schools.
- Need-Based Grants and Loans
- FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid
- EFC – Estimated Family Contribution
- Grants, i.e. Pell – do not have to repay
- Federally subsidized student loans-Interest is paid by the Education Department while you're enrolled at least half time in college.
- Unsubsidized student loans-Interest begins accruing as soon as the loan is disbursed, including while students are enrolled in school.
- Work-study
- Private parent loans

# Independent/Outside Scholarships

- Fastweb.com
- Scholarships.com
- Goingmerry.com
- Check with your place of employment or any other local/national organizations you might be a part of to see if they offer scholarships.
- Do not pay for scholarship services. The websites above all offer access to free scholarship opportunities.

# Student Aid FAFSA4caster

- Parents can use this tool to receive early estimates, create scenarios based on future earnings, and then establish college funding strategies.
  - <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>



# Financial Aid

## College Financial Aid Night Senior year

- File FAFSA as early as October 1 and no later than March 1 of your student's Senior Year
- Must have taxes completed to file
- Colleges will then issue a final Financial Aid Package in the spring of senior year, including:
  - Scholarships
  - Grants
  - Loans
  - Work-Study
  - Out-of-pocket Costs



# Questions?

Mary Raftery (A-L)

- [raftery@fontbonne.org](mailto:raftery@fontbonne.org)

Sarah Stiglianese (M-Z)

- [stiglianese@fontbonne.org](mailto:stiglianese@fontbonne.org)

Don't hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns!