**The College Application Process at AHS**

**What does applying to college involve?**

* Completing & submitting an online application
* Requesting application documents be sent from your school (AHS)
* Official Transcript (most of the time)
* School Report Form (completed by counselor)
* Counselor Recommendation Letter, if required (often required with Common App schools, sometimes required for other schools)
* AHS School Profile
* Application Fee Waiver (for students on free/reduced lunch)
* Requesting Teacher Recommendation Letters (when required)
* Sending official test scores via actstudent.org and/or collegeboard.org (SAT)—unless the college is Test-Optional or accepts unofficial scores during the application process

**The application**

* Some colleges use the **Common Application** (www.commonapp.org). The Common App opens on August 1. You can complete and submit one Common App to multiple schools, but you must first register with Common App through its website. Individual schools may require that you complete a school-specific writing supplement, and pay their application fee. Follow instructions for each school carefully. (See Common Application Specifics)
* Some colleges also are using the **Coalition Application** (www.mycoalition.org). You must create your own Coalition account. You will check the box in your Coalition account to indicate that you will be sending your transcript separately, and then you must turn in an AHS Transcript/Application Document Request Form.
* AHS does not begin accepting Transcript/Application Document Request Forms until **August 30, 2020.** Prioritize the completion of applications by deadlines as well as order of preference.
* For colleges with Rolling Admission, apply early.
* To be considered for scholarships/financial aid offered by individual colleges, you may be required to submit applications *earlier*.
* Apply well before each school’s deadline.
* Types of deadlines include **Rolling Admission, Priority Deadline, Early Action, Early Decision,** and **Regular Decision**.
* Your **final transcript** will be sent to the school you will be attending after high school graduation (usually by June 30). This is NOT automatic. You must notify Mrs. Susan Martin in student services that you are requesting a final transcript.

**Requesting application documents be sent from your school (AHS)**

* You must contact Mrs. Susan Martin in Student services or email her at [martin.susan@brevardschools.org](mailto:martin.susan@brevardschools.org) to make any document requests.

**Additional Tips for the College Application Process**

* Create a **professional email account** just for college-related communication.
* **Document and save** all application account usernames and passwords, and all essays.
* Use your **legal name** (needs to match your high school transcript).
* You may also need to provide your counselor’s name, e-mail address, phone number, and fax number.
* If you ask a teacher for a letter of recommendation, give the teacher information about yourself. You may choose to do so using the **Teacher Recommendation Form.**
* **Intended Major**: If you have a major, great! If not, *do not* leave this blank. *Indicate undecided or undeclared*. Some schools will have their own special designation, such as general studies.
* Be sure to consult with the college about the appropriateness of any changes to your **senior schedule**. Your counselor is a great resource to help you with this.
* **Interviews** are generally not a *required* part of the application process. However, if you are offered an opportunity to do an interview with a college, **take it**! Interviews can be offered on campus (during a visit) or locally by an admissions representative or alumnus in our area.
* Remember that participation in blogs, chat rooms, forums and social media (such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and SnapChat) are **never truly private**. Inappropriate content may come back to haunt you!!

**Types of Application Deadlines**

* **Early Decision:** In this process, a commitment is made by the student to the institution that, if admitted, the student **will** enroll. The student may apply to other colleges but only **one** can be an Early Decision application. It is always recommended that you speak to your counselor prior to choosing this option. You must withdraw all other applications upon admittance.
* **Early Action:** This process permits a student to submit an application to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the normal response dates in the spring. The candidate is **not committed** to enroll at that particular institution. The student may apply to other colleges.
* **Restrictive/Single Choice Early Action:** This is a non-binding but exclusive deadline; it works much like the typical Early Action deadlines, except you can only apply to one school this way (“single choice”). Not many schools offer this option, but for those that do, it shows that you’re that much more interested in attending the school (and admission counselors like to see that).
* **Priority Deadline:** A specific deadline, earlier than the college’s regular deadline, which allows a student’s application to be reviewed and compared only to those who have filed by that priority date. Decisions are made and the students are notified earlier than students applying under regular admission.
* \*\*\* Colleges that have the above admission practices often admit the majority of their students by these early deadlines.
* **Regular Decision:** There is a specific deadline date for applying. The student is usually notified of the admissions decision by April 1 or April 15. The student, in turn, must notify the colleges by May 1 as to whether they will attend or not attend.
* **Rolling Admission:** The college notifies the applicant of the admission decision as soon as the application has been processed, usually in no more than four to six weeks, and sometimes even sooner. It is to the student’s advantage to apply early; however, some colleges may defer a decision until they receive seventh semester grades.

**Suggested College Application Timeline**

**August**

* Students applying Common Application should complete the Brag Sheet & Resume
* How will you apply? (regular admission, rolling admission, open admission, or early application)
* Common App becomes available on August 1st.
* Give AHS teachers/staff plenty of notice (at least 2 weeks) to request Letters of Recommendations and Other Forms.
* Take physical or virtual tours of colleges (if you have not done so yet). And finalize your list of colleges to apply to.

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* Take advantage of individual college and career planning in the College & Career Center
* Look for scholarships year round. Scholarships will be regularly posted at https://www.brevardschools.org/AstronautHS

**September**

* Finalize your college list
* Read over applications
* Create Common App account at www.commonapp.org if you are applying to any Common App schools
* Start writing college essay(s). Ask for help from your English teacher, Guidance Counselor and/or in College & Career Center by appointment only
* Email your counselor if you need a Counselor Recommendation Letter and/or additional information/assistance in completing your applications
* Ask teachers to write a letter of recommendation if one or more of your schools require Teacher Recommendation Letter(s)
* Attend College Representative Visits scheduled with the College & Career Center and/or visit college campuses
* Research Financial Aid and scholarships

**Early October**

* Submit applications online and make contact with AHS student services to request any additional Transcript/Application Documents for public, state schools and those schools with Priority Deadlines, Early Decision and/or Early Action (often November 1st or 15th).
* Request ACT and/or SAT Score Reports be sent directly to the schools to which you are applying from the testing agency (www.actstudent.org or www.collegeboard.org), as required
* Complete and submit a FAFSA as early as October 1
* Attend any Senior College Workshops scheduled with the College & Career Center

**November**

* Submit applications online make AHS student services requests for schools with early deadlines of December 1 and Regular Decision deadlines of January 1 and 15
* Request ACT and/or SAT Score Reports be sent directly to the schools to which you are applying from the testing agency (www.actstudent.org or www.collegeboard.org), as required

**Frequently Asked Questions**

Below are several of the most frequently asked questions about the college admission process:

**How many college applications should I plan to send?**

* If you are planning to attend a four-year college, we suggest you apply to at least 3 (preferably 5) colleges with a good balance of the “admission risk factor.” For financial reasons, you might choose one to apply to as a "financial safety" school.
* Many AHS seniors file between six and eight applications. While there is no limit to the number of applications you may send, remember that limiting your choices in the fall will make the decision easier in the spring, and will force you to identify colleges that are the best fit for you personally.

**Should I bother to apply to a college we can't afford?**

* **YES!** The “sticker price” is not what you will pay. Take advantage of tools like the net price calculator and FAFSA 4caster to gain a clearer understanding of cost of attendance and eligibility for financial aid.
* Remember, many private colleges have endowments that are used to help offset the cost of attendance.
* Merit scholarships and non-need based university grants are generally awarded with the acceptance letter.
* It is wise to diversify your list with a variety of cost options.

**When do I start applying to colleges?**

* NOW!
* College application deadlines vary. Pace yourself so you won’t have to rush to complete all your applications at once.
* *Refer to the deadlines and pay close attention to when recommendations are due.*
* **File your state school applications early.** 
  + Apply early to colleges to give yourself the best chance at being admitted. And remember that after you turn in your Request Forms to your counselor, it will be up to three weeks before your transcript & other school documents are submitted to your schools.
* **Note**: As you apply, you'll often need to send an official copy of your test scores to each college if you did not do so when you took the ACT or SAT.
* ACT: www.actstudent.org SAT: www.collegeboard.org).

**One of my college applications requires me to write an essay. Where can I get help?**

* While writing a personal essay can be more challenging than a paper for a class, the same principles of good writing apply. Here are some tips to help you:

1. Allow yourself time to complete an essay section of a college application.

2. Review your essay.

3. Have someone (Writing Center, English teacher, College & Career Services staff, or your counselor) read over your rough draft to make any suggestions.

4. **Proofread!** A misspelled word or grammar error can ruin your efforts.

**I need a teacher letter of recommendation. What do I do?**

* First, ask a teacher if they are willing to write a letter for you.
* In most cases, you should request your letter from a junior teacher from a core course (English, Math)
* Provide only the letters being requested.
* **Always** give your recommender a *minimum* of two to three weeks to write the letter! Don't assume that they will, or even can, drop everything for you! Supply your recommender with a list of your grades, extracurricular activities, work experience and goals.
* Check back with your recommender in a couple weeks as a friendly reminder so that they don’t forget to write the letter. And always send a **thank you** for their efforts on your behalf.

**Waive or do not waive?**

* Generally, not waiving your right displays a lack of trust for your recommender. Your recommender may choose not to write for you if you indicate “do not waive.”
* **Note**: Those who choose to write a recommendation letter for you will typically not write negative letters of recommendation—ensure you have established a relationship with your recommender!

**When do I apply for financial aid?**

* In order to be considered for any federal aid programs, the student must file a *Free Application for Federal Student Aid Form (FAFSA).* The **FAFSA** is filed and submitted online as soon after **October 1** as possible. You and your parents/guardians should attend the Financial Aid Program in the month of September for an in-depth explanation of financing your college education.
* Do not forget to create your FSA ID before you begin the FAFSA form; it only takes a few minutes and could prevent processing delays.
* **Note**: Your college may have a separate institutional form or require the CSS Profile in addition to the FAFSA.
* Watch for specific college application deadlines that must be met to be considered for institutional financial aid.

**What are the different type of admissions decisions I should look out for?**

* **ACCEPT**: The applicant is formally admitted to the college or university.
* **DENY**: Admission was not granted.
* **DEFER**: The college or university determines that more information is needed to make a final decision about the applicant. They will often want to see the seventh semester grades and/or new test scores.
* **WAIT LIST**: If a student is notified that they are on a wait list, this means that the college has many more qualified students than they can accept. Students being offered admission from the wait list will be notified after the May 1st National Candidate Reply Date.

**I’ve been accepted to three different colleges. How do I let each of them know if I am attending or not attending? What if I’m not sure?**

* It is **your** responsibility to inform all the colleges, to which you have been accepted, about your decision. The college you are planning to attend must be notified of your decision by **May 1** at the latest. Sending a deposit to a college confirms your acceptance of a college's offer of admission.
* You should inform colleges that you will not be attending next fall by sending them a short letter, which thanks them for the offer of admission but informs them that you will not be attending. If you are unsure about whether you will attend a particular college (you're waiting to hear from your #1 choice college, or you're waiting to hear about financial aid), simply write a note to the college(s) telling them that you are unsure but wish to remain in the applicant pool until you have decided where you will attend.
* In any event, it is **your** responsibility to let a college know what your plans are. You expected the colleges to reply to your application quickly; grant them the same courtesy!