COMMON APPLICATION TIP SHEET

1. Go to commonapp.org and select "Create an Account" or "Start your application" to create your account. Select "First year student" (even if you are a Dual Enrollment student).
   o Use an email address you check often or create one you AND your parents can access for all college correspondence. Write down your password. Complete all the required questions to create an account.
   o After your account has been created, click on "College Search" to select the universities/colleges you want to apply to.

2. Click the + next to the college name to add. Once added, you can view the college's deadlines, application fees, required recommendations, required essay/other writing supplements. It is YOUR responsibility to have all sections submitted by the college's deadline!
   > **NOTE:** You can add and delete colleges at any time, but application requirements and sections change for each school. Use the "Requirements Grid" and each college's "College Information" page to find this information. You can also use Common App On Track, the mobile companion app, to track deadlines, set reminders, and more. You also want to visit the school's website directly for application requirements and more important information.

3. Once you have selected college(s), select the "Common App" tab and complete the following sections: Profile, Family, Education, Testing, Activities, Writing, and Courses and Grades (if applicable).

4. You must complete these sections prior to finishing the rest of the application. Once you have completed these sections, you will see a green check mark next to each. Here are some tips for each section:

   o **Profile:**
     ➤ Anything with a red asterisk is required to complete (not required to answer questions regarding religion, race, etc.)
     ➤ If you believe you qualify for the Common App Fee Waiver, you will be required to identify the way in which you qualify and it must be verified electronically by your School Counselor when completing the Common App recommendation for you.

   o **Family:**
     ➤ You need to know your parents' occupations, name of employer, level of education, names of the universities/colleges they attended, name of degree, and year they earned that degree
     ➤ You will need to know your siblings' level of education and names of universities or colleges that may have attended along with name of degree and dates the began and ended their education.

- **Education:**
  - Choose the correct "Cocoa Beach Jr/Sr High School" in Cocoa Beach, FL, CEEB Code: 100287
  - Only enter in college/university level courses if you are earning college credit from Dual Enrollment (do NOT count AP or IB courses).
  - Graduating Class Size – check your transcript or ask your School Counselor
  - Class Rank Reporting: Exact
  - Class Rank–see transcript
  - Rank Weighting: Unweighted
  - Cumulative GPA– if reporting unweighted GPA: see "state" GPA on unofficial transcript; for weighted GPA: ask your School Counselor
  - GPA Scale: 4 (if you will be reporting your unweighted GPA); 5 (if you will be reporting your weighted GPA)
  - GPA Weighting: indicate if you reported your Unweighted or Weighted GPA (recommended)
  - Course Scheduling System: Semester
  - List all senior year courses and do NOT abbreviate their titles.
  - May list up to 5 honors (awards) earned within 9-12 grade, such as AP Scholar, Science Award, or any other specific awards you have earned. Start with your top honor.
  - Must indicate if you have received assistance from a non-profit agency or private for-pay college advising service.
  - Must indicate future plans: career interest and highest degree planned.

- **Testing:**
  - Most schools require you to send your official ACT and/or SAT Test scores to your university/college directly from the testing company –visit actstudent.org or collegeboard.org or ibo.org
  - You can choose to self-report any of your test scores on Common App OR you can opt-out and not report any since you will send them via the testing company
    Note: Even if you self-report, official scores must be sent as soon as possible (ACT, SAT, SAT Subject, AP, and/or IB)
  - You will select the tests, number of scores you want to report from that test, number of future sittings for that test, composite score, and each section score (ACT/SAT) with the date that you earned that score

- **Activities:**
  - You have the option of reporting 10 activities. Activities could include: job, internship, family responsibilities, volunteer work, sports, and hobbies.
  - You do not have to write 10. Most applicants list about 6.
  - This section is how colleges can get to know more about you. It can show what makes you unique: your pursuits, interests, and passions. Focus on what activities can best tell that story and not on the number you are reporting.

- **Writing:**
  - Some colleges require submission of the personal essay, but not all do. You may submit a personal essay to any college, even if it is not required by that college. If not required by a college, you will be given the option during submission to include your essay or not for that college.

- The essay must be pasted in or typed directly in the box. You have 250-650 words and must select a prompt to answer.
- When you save, you will not know if the formatting worked. You will need to wait until you Preview to check the formatting. Check your formatting! Italics, bold, and underline make the text increase in size and occasionally cuts out text.
- *Disciplinary History:* Be honest –if answering "yes" emphasize what you have learned from the situation.
- *Additional Information:* This is a place to explain or clarify potential struggles or challenges you had. This can include shifts in your education, personal struggles that impacted your education, or difficulties with the law. Be authentic but focus on remorse or the positive consequences. Do not feel you need to fill the 650 words.

o **Courses and Grades:**
This section will only appear once you have added a college that requires it. You will need to obtain a copy of your unofficial transcript from the Student Services Department or use your FOCUS account to fill in your courses.

> *SPECIAL NOTE*: If other schools require the SSAR you may want to complete this section AND the SSAR at the same time.

- Answer "Yes" to the two initial questions.
- Then proceed to the 9th grade tab and follow the Course Assistant for the first time. You can skip this later, but at least complete it the first time.
  Note: Do NOT enter middle school courses in 9th grade!

On each of the following grade level pages you will need to fill out the courses as they appear on your transcript. See example

Use the following information to fill out the boxes on each page:
- Grading Scale: "A-F"
- Schedule: "Semesters"
- Enter the first course name exactly as the transcript says
- Choose the most appropriate subject for that course
- Choose course Level:
  - "Regular/Standard" – all courses that do not indicate Honors, AP, IB, MYP, or Dual Enrollment, e.g. HOPE
  - "Honors" – courses with the "Honors" distinction, e.g. Algebra 2 Honors

- "Pre-IB" – courses with "MYP" or "IB MYP", e.g. IB MYP English 1
- "AP" – Advanced Placement courses, e.g. AP Human Geography
- "Dual Enrollment" – only EFSC courses that appear on your high school transcript (do NOT include EFSC courses you paid for)

When looking at your Cocoa Beach transcript the **T** on the far-left column indicates the term the course was taken in. "1" indicates semester 1, "2" indicates semester 2 and "3" indicates a yearlong course.

- ➢ Report Course Grades – Report grades as they appear on your transcript. You will **not** enter a grade in each box. See the picture example below. Enter the course grades in the semester that you took the course, e.g. Economics in semester 1 = grade in S1 – Government in semester 2 = grade in S2

- ➢ Report Course Credits – You do **not** have to have something in each box. Credits should correspond to grades. Each semester of a course is .5 with the exception of yearlong courses that are reported as 1 full credit.

	Semester Grades *			Semester Credits *		
	S1 *	S2 *	Final *	S1 *	S2 *	Final *
Yearlong courses: Algebra 1, Biology, US History, Geometry.			A			1
All other courses are reported as .5 credit per semester.	A	A		.5	.5	

- ➢ Once you have used the Course Assistant the first time, you can continue to use it or enter straight into the course grid for each grade level. Do NOT enter 10th grade courses in the 9th grade grid!
- ➢ Continue to report courses for each grade level.
- ➢ "Other Courses" –Enter any high school courses you took in Middle School.
- ➢ Finally, you may preview your entries to check your self-report.

5. From the "Dashboard" tab you can click on the school name and answer each college's questions, assign recommenders, and Review & Submit your entire Common App.

YOU MUST COMPLETE EACH SECTION FOR EACH COLLEGE AND SUBMIT SEPARATELY!

- o **Recommenders and FERPA**
  - ➢ FERPA –You have an option to sign a release, waiving your right to view your recommendations and supporting documents submitted on your behalf. While you do not have to waive your right, many recommenders will not submit information if you do not (much like a sealed envelope with a recommendation inside should not be opened by the student).
  - ➢ Counselor: Invite your School Counselor! Your School Counselor must be included in order to complete the School Report and submit your transcript. Ensure you are using their @brevardschools.org email. You will need to meet with your counselor at least one week

prior to adding them to your application. You will also need to submit a Brag Sheet to your counselor before a counselor recommendation can be written. *If you do not meet with your counselor or submit a Brag Sheet in advance, we cannot guarantee that items will be submitted on time.*

- ➤ Teacher: Many colleges no longer require letters of recommendation. While they may allow up to 2 or 3, it is typically unnecessary. Double-check the school's application requirements. If you do want a recommendation from a teacher, choose a teacher who knows you well and has had you in class. It is also best to include a teacher that teaches in the field you are wanting to major in, e.g. you want to study Engineering, so pick a Math and/or Science teacher.

  - ▪ Select "Invite Recommenders" and enter your teachers' information. Ask your teachers BEFORE you invite them. Check-in with the teachers to make sure they received the email invitations from Common App and give them a specific deadline to upload it. Ideally, your teacher recommendation should be submitted at the same time or before your application, but you are able to submit your application if letters have not yet been submitted. If you do submit before, make sure your letters are submitted by the application deadline.

  - ▪ For each college you are applying to and want teacher letters of recommendation sent, click each college tab on the left, select the teacher from the dropdown menu (if you have already added them), and click assign. This will allow that specific college to see your teacher's recommendation.

  - ▪ If you do **not** see the picture below, that college does **not** accept teacher letters of recommendation.

- ➤ Log back into Common App to check the status of your recommenders. For the letters of rec written by the teachers, you will see "Submitted" and the date once it is done.
- ➤ For the School Report, you will see a green check mark once it is done.
- ➤ Advisors: This is not for staff at Cocoa Beach! Counselors are not permitted to be both recommenders and advisors. This is for a professional, family member, or trusted friend who may be assisting you with your application. They can view your application, but they cannot alter or submit it. You do not have to enter an Advisor.

6. Notice all deadlines for each school–it is YOUR responsibility to make sure all parts of your application are in by this deadline (this includes the counselor portion and letters of rec submitted by teachers)

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

o   Complete the SSAR (or SPARK for UCF), if required by your university/college.
o   Send official transcripts, if required. To request official transcripts, complete the link on the Student Services webpage.
o   Send official test scores. Visit collegeboard.org, act.org, or ibo.org.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

o   CommonApp Ready, a toolkit with more in-depth information per section
o   SSAR, Student Self-Reported Academic Record
o   UF SSAR FAQs, answers to commonly asked questions for filling out the SSAR